

L. 6. 56

A N
E S S A Y

Concerning
Friendly Reproof:

Explaining clearly the
N A T U R E,
Excellency and Usefulness
Of it.

Proving both from Reason and Revelation that it is an Indispensable Duty.
And laying down very plain Rules concerning the properest Methods, both of giving and receiving it, &c.

There is a reproof that is not seasonable. 'Tis far better to reprove than to be angry secretly: How good is it when thou art reprov'd, to shew repentance ! Ecclesiasticus xx. 3.

L O N D O N: Printed for R. Cumberland, at the Angel in S. Paul's Church-Yard; where all Gentlemen may be furnish'd with Acts of Parliament, new or old, 1696.



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The Preface.

OF all sorts of Writings that have appeared in Publick, in this keen and satyrical Age, I know none that have prov'd so beneficial to Souls as those which have treated *solely* and *practically* about some particular Moral or Divine Subject. And indeed a considerate Man need not wonder how this comes to pass; for as such Subjects are the most excellent, because they serve the Interest of our most *permanent*

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Part, so *particular* Discourses upon them bid fairest for Success, being they are most instructive. A few general and quaint Sentences will not serve the Turns of mean Capacities: The most are neither *wise* enough nor willing enough to be *so*, to be improv'd and awaken'd by *By-Hints*.

The Anatomists, in their Pursuits after a more perfect Knowledge of the admirable Structure of Human Bodies, pry into even the minutest Parts. They are fit Patterns for Authors to imitate, for there is no Method so likely to enrich Men's Minds with a competent store of Christian

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an Wisdom for the Regulation of their Manners, and the making them eminent Benefactors to Mankind, and to have a clear Survey of the whole Body of Truth, as diving into its very Bowels, and dissecting all the Veins and Membrules of it. The separate Observation of every one of the Branches of Duty, as they are laid by the Hands of God and Nature in the Bible of Reason and External Revelation presents us with a pleasant Sight of the peculiar Tendency and Use of every one of them; and the rare Contexture & beautiful Harmony of them all together. Do Physicians by their Art

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and Scrutiny, see how the Health of the Body is hazarded by the Stoppage of a small Duct or the Breaking of a Thred scarcely discernible to an obtuse or careless Eye? Why? so many Christians too by narrowly looking into the Nature of ev'ry Duty *singly* and *apart*, see the Office and Serviceableness of it to Man's Spirit, and that the least of them can't be spar'd by one who would repair his Primitive Frame. A little Patience would by this means suffice to trace the Excellency and absolute Necessity of it, how scornfully soever a hasty Glance may detract from it.

But

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But since this Method does discover to us the Brightness and Beauties of ev'ry Duty, it unquestionably points out the absolute Necessity of *Universal Holiness*, and consequently befriends and advances Religion very much. In short, 'tis a great Instrument of a *gradual and deep-laid Conviction*, and *that* is the Mother of firm and pious *Resolutions*; and *they* are next to the *Divine Concurrence*, the principal Movements of Growth in Grace; which is nothing less than the *Cement of Eternal Glory*, a Prize which will answer the Cost of our severest Meditation and Endeavour. Wherefore since Friendly Reproof
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is so momentous an Office of Friendship that no one can entirely discharge his Duty in that *Relation* without Reproving ; 'Tis very convenient that every Christian should be inform'd of his indispensable Obligation to reprove his Friend, and be stock'd with Rules for the more prudent Administration of it. So that I can foresee no just occasion of making a long Apology for writing a particular Discourse concerning it. And as the Dignity and Usefulness of Friendly Reproof will vindicate me from the Imputation of being lavish of my Time and Ink in handling it thus by it self
fc

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so there are many Circumstances which will justify the Publication of it, with an enumeration of which I shall not stand to trouble you. But there's one which I cannot forbear mentioning.

We live in an Age in which Curiosity it self is almost surfeited with both ingenious and elaborate Tracts on almost all Subjects, and yet *Friendly Reproof*, *Admonition*, *Gratulation*, and the other Offices of *fraternal Sociableness* have been little more than just skirmish'd upon and coldly recommended. Whence this strange Oversight took its Rise it is not material now to enquire. To confine my Complaint

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plaint to the Cause of Re-
proof. That a Work of this
Nature is too much wanted,
is very manifest by the so
common Omission of this kind
of Charity; for not only
those Wretches who are en-
slav'd to the worst Habits and
intolerable Enormities, but
even Men who are strict Liv-
ers and exemplary for other
Acts of Beneficence, are ve-
ry stupidly guilty of it. In
the *first* sort, who wallow
in very filthy Vices, this
Neglect may be suspected to
be *presumptuous* Wickedness;
but the constant Circumspe-
ction of the latter obliges me
in Christian Charity to im-
pute it to the want of due
Con-

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Conviction in them. Indeed I have observ'd this in a great many pious Christians, who had never a distinct Notion of Friendly Reproof, and confessed they were more at a loss to understand this Moral Duty than any other. 'Twas this Thought which made me commiserate the Condition of my Countrymen, especially of the sincerer Members of our excellent Church. Some have been so courteous as to own that they have gain'd more Light by my Conferences with them about this Matter than they ever receiv'd before, and desir'd me, for the sake of their Memories, to pleasure 'em with
the

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the Publication of a distinct
Treatise on this Subject;
which Proposal, to speak in-
genuously, I was very for-
ward to comply with: For
I think it very fitting at such
a Time as this, when *Lay*
Christians are so very apt to
inveigh against the Laziness
and Unsuccessfulness of the
Clergy, to acquaint 'em what
they ought to do for one an-
other's Souls, among them-
selves; that they may turn
their Boldness against their
excellent Pastors into a Se-
verity upon their own Neg-
ligence; for, unless I am mi-
staken, Ministers are as un-
capable of being omnipresent
as others; and if the Laity
will

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will not add their Endeavours to those of their Ministers, God will not condemn these for not converting voluntary Creatures irresistibly, which seems to be more than his own Province.

Some learned Friends, who had greater Abilities than my self, could not be wrought upon to set about this necessary Work. When Hopes and Requests were defeated, I could not think it becoming one (who had weigh'd the Usefulness of this Undertaking, and for that Reason had been such an importunate Suiter to others for a distinct Treatise about this Subject) to affect Deafness to the

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the Requests of well-meaning People; not that I think the Requests of Friends are a sufficient Excuse for the Publication of a Book, if the Subject be frivolous, or (tho' weighty and useful) has been largely & didactically handl'd before, for this breeds Confusion: But I think that cannot be said in this Case. Men have been very stingy of their Advice about this Duty, unless we can imagine that some few Hints in general Treatises of Friendship, or a casual Sermon or two upon it, are sufficient upon a Subject, barely to explain the Nature of which, common Prejudices considered, will take up near
the

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the Compass of two Sermons.
'Twas this Consideration, with
my peculiar Love to the Sub-
ject, that forc'd me to review
some of my own Papers about
it, and transcribe 'em fair
for the Press, hoping, that
since better Supplies could not
be obtain'd, these Instructi-
ons might be accepted kindly,
since they may contribute
something to the convincing
Christians of the Importance
of this Duty, and animating
them to the prudent Exercise
of it. It can be no Breach of
Modesty to suppose that it
will be better than no parti-
cular Discourse about it at all;
and perhaps the Simplicity of
both the Style and Thoughts
may

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may make it fitter for the Use of Illiterate People than close and polite Writings.

And now, Reader, my Request is (since I have done my poor Endeavour to bring Re=proof into Fashion again, in which Enterprize, if I succeed, I shall do a considerable Piece of Service to my Country and the Cause of Virtue) that you would deign to joyn your Interest with mine at the Throne of Grace, in a fervent Prayer, that this little Treatise may be honour'd with the greatest Encomium, th'Improvement of our Minds in the *Theory*, and of our *Conversation* and *Friendship* by the constant and discreet
Ex-

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Use Execution of what we are
lose herein exhorted to.

Re= With which glorious effect
my that these Lines may be at-
Re= tended, I chearfully resign
in their Fortune to the Blessing
uc- and wise Disposal of the gra-
ra- cious Providence of the One
my invifible and immortal God
ir- (to whose Glory my Heart
to has dedicated them from the
ine Womb) in the Name of *Jesus*
Christ.

n a
lit= *May his Grace be with thy Spirit*
r'd evermore. *Pray for thine and*
m, *true Friendship's true Friend.*

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our
by
eet
x-

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E R R A T A.

pag. lin.	read.	pag. lin.	read.
6 17	<i>by the Help.</i>	118 29	<i>enclafs'd.</i>
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57 3	<i>us.</i>	182 24	<i>eſpecially when</i>
60 4	<i>on.</i>		<i>with.</i>
62 16, 17	<i>dele not.</i>	183 8	<i>are inſeparable</i>
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91 7	<i>διῶνς.</i>	225 22	<i>the ſaid.</i>
92 14	<i>but.</i>	26	<i>my Memory en-</i>
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2. What is become of the great Quantities of Mo-
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A N

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Concerning
Friendly Reproof.

C H A P I.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Distributing the whole Work.

THAT this Useful Subject may be handled as plainly as I can, I shall (God assisting) endeavour,

- I. *To explain the distinct Nature of Friendly Reproof.*

B

II. *To*

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II. To prove that it is both a Natural and Revealed Duty.

III. To give a Clear, Separate and Large Account of those several Qualifications, which are prerequisite in ev'ry Friendly Reprover, to apply his Reproof with least Offence and most Success.

IV. To detect the Vanity of the Excuses which are usually fram'd for the Omission of Friendly Reproof.

V. To propose some Motives for the Encouragement of the Constant, Careful and Seasonable Exercise of Friendly Reproof.

VI. To give Christians some easie Rules concerning their Conduct, when they are reprov'd, and to excite them to a grateful Improvement of their Friend's Reproofs.

VII. To draw some Practical Inferences from all the foregoing Chapters.

VIII. To close the whole Discourse with an Humble, Affectionate and Vigorous Exhortation to a wise Compliance with the Design of this Work: And to annex a few applicatory Collects of Devotion.

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CHAP. II.

Explaining the distinct Nature of Friendly Reproof.

SECT. I.

Of the Occasion and Method of this Chapter.

THE Method, in which I promis'd to range my Thoughts, obliges me, in the first Place, to give a plain and distinct Account of the Nature of *Friendly Reproof*. This will, I doubt, take up more Room than I suspected, when I first resolv'd upon this Undertaking; but, however, 'tis so very needful, that it can't be excusably past by: For it is impossible for any Writer to represent his Sentiments, about any Subject, in a due Light, unless the Nature of his Subject be first rightly understood. So that, tho' we should lay down the strictest Rules that can be given concerning

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applying Reproof, they would be of no more Use to my Reader, before a just Notion of *Friendly Reproof* has been founded in his Mind, than a Lecture about the various Motions of Light upon our Eyes, whence it is that we see so many Differences in Colours, would be to one born blind, who was always wholly devoid of the Idea of Colour in general. And truly the generality have such a perplext Idea of the Subject of this Book, that, out of Pity to those mean Capacities, for whose benefit this Treatise was penn'd, I shall be forc'd to make use of that Length, in order to disengage their Minds, which I do not at all delight in. And, moreover, which makes this Enquiry the more necessary, it may easily be observ'd, That the Irregular Conceptions which most Men always have had, and still do entertain, about *Friendly Reproof*, have prov'd very Injurious not only to the Fortune, but also to the Reputation of the Exercise of this Duty, as will shortly appear. Since therefore this Enquiry is so necessary, we will immediately set about it.

Now our Misapprehensions in the present Case must spring from either, first too slight and scanty Definition of *Reproof* in general: Or secondly from confounding

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ing Friendly Reproof with other kinds of *Christian Reproof*.

Wherefore it shall be the Business of this Chapter to make the Nature of Friendly Reproof the better apprehended, by giving,

I. A fixt and liberal Definition of *Reproof* in General: And,

II. By pointing out the particular Characteristick of *Friendly Reproof*, which distinguishes it from all other Kinds of *Reproof*.

S E C T II.

Regulating the Thoughts concerning Reproof in general, as it differs from Admonition, Censoriousness, and all manner of Upbraiding whatsoever.

Carnal Prejudice and Inadvertence are the two principal Sources of Error; and doubtless either one or both of them have a great Hand in making the bare telling a Person of a real Fault, before his Face, pass so current with the multitude for a perfect Definition of *Reproof*, as for the most part it does.

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That this lame Definition is one main Reason why *Friendly Reproof* is so very Nice and Difficult a Subject, and is very unaccountable, setting aside the great Mischief it has been the Author of, will, I hope, quickly appear to any but such whose great Affection for a Discharge from Duty, dressing up Sin in the Garb of Virtue, and for being honour'd at the same Time with the Title of Good and well-designing Christians, has brib'd them to shut their Eyes against Conviction.

For, to weigh it's Consequences: First, if this Account of Reproof is perfect, then Admonition and Reproof are one and the same thing; For if one Man admonishes another *against*, and the second reproves him *for the Commission of the same Fault*, after the first had admonish'd him against it, 'tis evident both these Persons told that third Person of a Fault to his Face: And 'tis as evident that he who admonish'd him, and he who reprov'd him, did two distinct Acts of Beneficence: But these two Acts are confounded by the foremention'd Definition of *Reproof*. But, for Explanation's sake, we will dwell a little here, and be beholden to the Light of a few Instances for a thorough Discovery of the Difference between *Admonition* and *Reproof*. This I think

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think is the more convenient to be done, because they very often go together, are near-a-kin, and very like, and therefore often mistaken one for the other.

Admonition and *Reproof* are both of them extraordinary Acts of Charity to the Soul; they both aim at the Promotion of Virtue, and the Prevention of Sin. Speech and Letters are the sole Instruments of serving Virtue either of these ways. So far they both agree, their End and Conveyances are the same; but, nevertheless, there are other Circumstances, which make them very remarkably different.

For first, *Admonition* puts us in Mind of approaching Dangers, and is tender'd purely to instil Caution and Circumspection into a Friend; it has an Eye to the *future*: But *Reproof* acquaints of *past* and actual Faults, and strives to beget in the Offender humble Acknowledgment of, and hearty and compleat Penitence for them. For instance, If I am aware that my Friend's Business happens to compel him, as he has regard, tho' but in a moderate degree, to his own or Family's Temporal Convenience, to meet some Company at some certain Times, who are enslav'd to a fondness for Intemperance, and so inur'd to the Scourges of Debauchery that Crapula's are no more

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than Flea-bites, or perchance Pleasures to them; and who design, when they have got my Friend among them, to be forcing Cups and multiplying Healths, not out of Loyalty and Love but a malicious Principle to carry on the Devil's Plot, and to triumph over infirm Constitutions, to whom excess of Liquor is not so portable; I will for the sake of his Welfare indulge my Jealousie of the State of his Soul, and admonish him of it, that he may be arm'd against the worst, prepare his Heart against the Temptation by Prayer, Deliberation, Consultation, Resolution, and other holy Aids and Policies. Thus, by Help of a loving Whisper, and a seasonable *Memento*, he may be made both humble enough not to run too hastily into Dangers, and also chearful, prudent and couragious enough, with a pious Trust in God, who by his Providence has call'd him to the Conflict (even tho' he should be one naturally of a frail and limber Disposition) to resist and baffle the Temptation, grapple with Importunity, Reproaches and a crafty Assault, which 'tis hardest of all to withstand; I mean their seeming Civility and pretended Concern for his being fall'n into Melancholy, which deprives him of all that Mirth and Pleasure which they enjoy, if we may
trust

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trust the Surface, the loudness of their Laughter, the Purfiness of their Carcase without peeping within upon those growing Disorders of the Blood, which are very busie in preparing Aches and Pains for their last Years, and a more sumptuous Feast suddenly for Worms.

Briefly, my dear Friend, by this means may avoid their Vice without shunning their Persons, be courteous without being caught by their Flatteries, sociable without partaking of their Sin, virtuous not morose, may save his secular Advantage without doing any thing which tends to the Loss of his Soul.

But, if for all this, or indeed tho' I had not admonish'd him, I find him vanquish'd by Drink when he leaves his Company, I think it my part to arrest the first Opportunity, when his Faculties are recover'd, to reprove him for not parting with Men, till he had made himself like a Beast. This is matter of Fact, and therefore Matter of *Reproof*, not a mere possibility of Sinning, as in the Case of *Admonition*. A *Foresight of Temptation* makes *Admonition* seasonable, but only *Compliance with Temptation* makes *Reproof* seasonable.

But, secondly, Admonition and Reproof differ in as much as Admonition may address

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to all the Faculties of the Soul, whereas Reproof can only meddle with the Memory and the Will. Thus, for instance, if I foresee any Danger of my Friend's being ensnar'd into the Commission of any certain Sin, tho' he was never guilty of it to my Knowledge, yet I judge it my Duty, as I am his well-wisher, to admonish him against it; if he has ever done it before, that he do it no more, and if he has not done it, to make him still the more carefully cherish and retain his Innocence. Perhaps he is not sensible that such an Action is a Fault; if so, my Admonition informs him that it is such by producing some positive Divine Law, or evidencing it by some clear Deduction from some positive Divine Law, or from some common Principle or other, which all, or at least most and the soberest, Men grant to be a firm Basis of Arguing. When I thus *admonish* him, I do an Act of Charity to his Understanding: I implicitly instruct him in such an Admonition; I say implicitly, for I must acquaint you that *Admonition* and *Instruction*, tho' they may be coincident, as in the present Case, are two different Acts, and as distinct from one another as Admonition and Reproof: For tho, when I admonish a Friend against a Fault, which he did not know was a Fault,

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I instruct as well as admonish him, yet since when I began to speak of this Fault, I considered him rather as one whose Soul was approaching to the Brink of Danger (being certain of this, that he was likely to be tempted) than as a Person who was ignorant that his Compliance with the Solicitation, foreseen by me, is sinful and pernicious (for I was uncertain whether or no he knew that it is sinful) 'tis evident that this Exertion of Beneficence was *casually*, and therefore but *materially Instruction*, whereas 'twas *designedly*, and therefore *formally Admonition*. For tho' he had not been ignorant that that Compliance with the approaching Temptation is sinful, yet my warning him of it at this Juncture, before the Temptation accosts him, might have been useful by reason of other Circumstances (and if it may be useful where there is no need of Instruction, then they are two distinct Acts) for tho' this my Friend has been told, and is convinced, that the Sin, which I apprehend him in all likelihood a going to be strongly solicited to, is a Sin, yet perhaps at that time he may be inconsiderate, his Imagination may be obnoxious to Impostures, and may fancy some mighty Purchase in shewing his Obedience to the said Solicitation : His Memory and Recol-

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Recollective Faculty may be drowsie, nay perhaps in a dead Sleep. On all or any of these accounts my Admonition may be seasonable, as a charitable deed to his Imagination, by painting to the Life the Deformity of the Sin which lies in wait for him, and the pitifulness of the Benefit which the commission of it can, at the best, bring him in; if that benefit be compar'd in the Ballance with the Favour of God and Conscience, which will be interrupted by his so doing: Now, 'tis advantagious to my Friend, in that Condition, with respect to his Understanding and Memory; at such a Season 'tis a good Office to both of them together; for by awakening the latter it puts the former into a due Posture of Consideration, which is the faithfullest Watchman of the Soul.

Again, there may be a Time when my Friend may know such or such an Action to be a Sin, but nevertheless may not be aware of his being in instant Danger of being beleaguer'd by it, unless a Stander-by mind him of it, and consequently how well soever his Soul may be habitually prepar'd against all Temptation, he cannot make such actual Preparation against that particular Temptation, unless he is admonish'd of it; for 'tis particular Admonition

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tion that makes him capable of making such an actual Preparation as is necessary to countermin those crafty Devices, and powerful Politicks which the Devil and his Agents, both within and without him, may use to circumvent and betray him into the Sin.

But lastly, suppose the Memory should be brisk; and the Understanding be not benighted by Ignorance, nor canker'd through Remissness of Thought; nay, tho' he should have a Foresight of the Danger, yet perhaps the Will may be too pliant and flexible to the Temptation, which I perceive just lighting upon his Head: Perhaps 'tis a Temptation to that Sin to which the Soul yields soonest of all, a Sin to which his Nature, Education or Calling inclines him most. The Thoughts may be sound when the Affections lean awry: An ill Bent may be cocker'd in the Heart, when sound Notions flourish in the Head: He may want to be fortifi'd, tho' not to be instructed. How seasonable *Admonition* is, when Matters stand thus, I need not add: All true Christians who feel Divine Sensations in themselves find Temptations very painful to 'em, and consequently find it very difficult to row against the Tide of Temptation, when the Will is so treacherous. Thus you see how *Admonition* has to do with all the Faculties of the Soul; but *Reproof* does not reach so far.

Reproof.

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Reproof strikes not at the Understanding, nor at all tampers with the Imagination : No wise Man will reprove his Friend for Ignorance, unless 'tis wilful ; and then he re-proves him not for his Ignorance, but for his foolishly abusing the Opportunities he had to improve his Mind by Knowledge, which would have prevented that Ignorance. 'Tis unreasonable to blame a Person for what could not be avoided. Ignorance consider'd abstractly from the Will is a Misfortune, not a Fault : A Pagan can't be blam'd for not coming to the Lord's Table : 'Tis no Omis-sion of Duty in him, because he knew it not to be a Duty ; but he may be justly reprov'd for being churlish or slothful, since the un-reasonableness of such Habits may be learnt in Nature's School, and for that Reason they are such Habits as lie open to the Condemna-tion of the Mind, unassisted by external Con-demnation. Faults only are the Subject of Reproof ; now a Fault is, in more Words, any thing done or omitted with the consent of the Will, in opposition to that degree of Knowledge, which the Mind is in present possession of, concerning good and evil. Knowledge is presuppos'd before the Will is capable of offending : Now Know-ledge is the Subject of the *Intellect*, and there-fore where it is wanting it must be infus'd by
Instruction,

Friendly Reproof 15

Instruction, for the Intellect is the Object of Instruction. The Intellect is the sole part of Man which is capable of being assisted by that Help; whereas Admonition assists all the Powers of the Soul, sometimes severally, and sometimes two or more of them together: All the Faculties of the Soul are the possible Objects of it, as I think hath been sufficiently shewn: Whereas *Reproof* deals only with the Will and the Memory: The Will is the principal Object of its Relief, for it excites the Memory only, that the Will may be set to Rights. When one Man reproves another, he does not stand to tell him, That such an Action is a Fault (for he supposes that the *Reproved* knows that already, for otherwise it would be his Business to instruct, not to chide) but he puts him in Mind that he committed that Fault, lest he should forget it, and so not humble his Soul and repent of it, that he may dread it the more for the future.

Briefly, Souls in the State of Danger are the Objects of *Admonition*; but Souls in a state of Actual, new-contracted Guilt are the Objects of *Reproof*. *Admonition* promotes Vigilance, *Reproof* advances Patience, that Admonition against the Sin, after 'tis repented of, may take the deeper Root in the Mind and Memory.

[Third]

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Thirdly, Another Difference between *Admonition* and *Reproof* is this; the Subjects of *Admonition* are more than the Subjects of *Reproof*: *Admonition* may safely meddle with Internal as well as External Acts and Habits: Whereas *Reproof* can't safely touch upon any Faults, but those which are visible to the Senses; which we prove thus.

God's general Prohibition of *Pride*, *Malice*, *Envy*, &c. together with ev'ry individual human Creature's self-consciousness of his being apt to be tainted with these malignant Dispositions of Spirit in such and such Circumstances sufficiently ascertains us that ev'ry Man is liable to be distemper'd with one or more of these Maladies, according to the Variety of Conditions to which he is obnoxious, unless Care is us'd to fill the Pores of the Soul with Thoughts which are of a sufficiently Divine and Powerful Nature, to obstruct the Inroad of the Infection. For since God does nothing in vain, 'tis clear that he would not have prohibited those Habits, had he not foreseen a Necessity of such a Prohibition; that is to say, that we should all of us, some time or other be more or less tempted to all or some of them by bad Spirits: And as his both gracious and general Prohibition of them suggests that ev'ry Man lies open to these *Arrows* of the Host of Hell, so does ev'ry Man's self-

Friendly Reproof. 17

self consciousness suggest the same thing too (which was the second Proof hinted) since all Men are of the same Frame and Nature with ev'ry Man, as well internally as externally (for God loves Uniformity in Works of the same kind) and therefore all do meet with such Injections, more or less, whilst they are here; tho' individual human Creatures different Use of their common Nature, and that common Grace which is tender'd to them all, to improve the common Faculties of the said common Nature (which different Use of the said common Opportunities qualifies them for different Degrees of particular Grace) may make some Souls abler, and others less able to resist these Injections of the Devil and his Agents: For tho' God rewards an extraordinary Improvement of common Grace, with Additions of greater spiritual Strength, in proportion to the said Improvement, which makes such improv'd Souls the more difficultly passable to the Injections of the Devil; as also, tho' the notorious Abuse of common Grace lays the Souls of wicked Men more pervious to the Injections of bad Spirits, through the want of that Strength which decays by the diminution of particular Grace, of which God in just Judgment deprives them, yet all are vulnerable in this state. When the Good shall enter into their
ultimate

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ultimate State of Happiness, and the Wicked into their ultimate State of Misery; they may be both properly enough said to be invulnerable: For the Saints will be perfectly invulnerable there, where they will be out of the Reach of all Temptation, where no Devil can any more come near to assault them than they can find it possible to wound God himself, in whose Presence they continually dwell; and then the damn'd may be said to be perfectly invulnerable, because their Souls are all wound and anguish, and are not receptive of more horrible Impressions from the whole Camp of Darkness than those Torments which are inseparable to their state of Eternal Damnation. Now, as the Blest and the Damn'd will have invulnerableness common to them both in their last State, so 'tis common to them both while they are in this State, as have not undergone as long a Trial as Providence has design'd for them, to have vulnerable Souls, as well as vulnerable Bodies. Indeed their common vulnerableness here does admit of Degrees, whereas invulnerableness admits of none, and the Good can't be said to be as easily vulnerable as the Wicked, yet they are both vulnerable. Bad Spirits must be at more Expence to wound a good Christian than a bad one, yet the best Christian is capable of being wounded.

Now
'tis

Friendly Reproof. 19

'Tis this Universal Sense of the vulnerability of Human Nature, taken in its full latitude, that is to say, Soul and Body, sometimes singly and sometimes together, which is planted by Nature in ev'ry Man's Mind, that warrants a tender and affectionate Jealousie, which Men, who have a judicious Kindness for their Friends, feel, at some Seasons, glowing in their Breasts for one another's Souls. Consequently, 'tis not only lawful but laudable to forewarn a Friend against those Stains and Pollutions of the Heart, *Pride, Envy, Malice, Uncharitableness, Pusillanimity, Distrusting Divine Providence, Immoderate Confidence in Self, &c.*

Admonition against Pride and Elation of Spirit is seasonable when my Friend is on a sudden rais'd to a higher Preferment than he did or could expect: And if he should by some Private or Publick Revolution be brought to endure Hardship, to struggle with a narrow Fortune or Contempt, 'twill be seasonable to admonish him against giving Way to *Dejection of Mind, Despondence, Discontent, Impatience, prostituting his Conscience*, and the like: And whoever thinks himself above being admonish'd against such hurtful Habits, because he is so happy as not to crouch under them at present, forgets his Make and State, forgets that he is of a brittle Frame,

that

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that he has a Soul that is as liable to be dilapidated by Devils, as his Body is by the Hostility of any of the Elements: He forgets that he is in a State of floating Circumstances, a State of Cumber and Combat, where the Saints triumphant were formerly militant: In short, he forgets that he is on this Side of Heaven, where many who once stood, have, for want of Vigilance, and probably, through the scornful Neglect of Admonition, in particular, desperately fallen.

But since 'tis given to no Man to know his Friend's Heart any farther than he can gather from his own Information, and the common Tenor of his Carriage; and, moreover since no Man is fatally proud when he is Rich, Ingenious, Learned or in Dignity or great Esteem; or necessitated to envy his Thriving Enemy, or hate his Competitor, or to blaspheme the Council of Heaven in Adversity, tho' all Men are too much in Danger of being dawb'd with such odious Qualities, it follows, that such internal Habits in particular Persons are not capable of being reprov'd, unless the Owners of the Hearts infested with such Leprosies make an ingenuous Confession of such Internal Disorders, tho' they are in their own Nature worthy of *Reproof*: They are Subjects of General and unfixt Reproof, but we cannot safely arraign This or That,

Friendly Reproof. 21

That, or a Third Person, as guilty of them, because Hearts are inscrutable to human Eyes, and 'tis Wisdom not to sport with God's Prerogative.

Indeed, when we plainly see a Person carry himself too magisterially, and making a Theatre of his Heart by arrogant boasting; and a second make ev'ry inoffensive Word Fuel or Flame; or a third railing often against a particular Person behind his Back, this untoward Mien of theirs, licences us to suspect that Envy, Self conceit, or a quarrelsome Temper lurks and ferments in their Hearts: And because since we are Creatures capable of Suspicion, and conscious of the like Passions in our selves, when our animal Spirits undergo the like Agitations, we can't help harbouring Suspicions arising from Probabilities: For probable Evidence is the clearest we can have of one another's Hearts: 'Tis prudent immediately to turn these Suspicions into Charities, by admonishing Persons of such Conversations against the fore-mention'd ill Tempers of Mind: For it squares with our natural Notion of God's being a Good and Gracious Being, to believe that this Passion of Suspicion was planted in our Nature, to fit us to heal one another's Sores, not to make us dissociable and Devils to one another: But we should never ha-
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mor such Suspensions 'till they extort from us a positive Sentence, and indeed by admonishing we keep our selves from being betray'd into the Presumption of reprov'g in such a Case. Marvel not, Reader, that I said *Presumption*, for tho' the Sentence may be *materially* true, yet it cannot be *formally* equitable in Man's Mouth, because he has no right to judge his Fellow's Heart, our utmost Rule of judging it by, being but Probability; for all Men must grant that Conjectures and Guesses are but fortuitious Judgments, and therefore can't be equitable, 'till Fortune and Providence can be prov'd the same Being. Whence we may discern, that tho' we may safely speak against Pride and such internal Habits, whatever they are, indeterminately, as Ministers in the Pulpit, and Authors in Books, yet no Man can safely reprove another for Pride or any internal sinful Habit, because Faults visible to the Senses are the sole subject of Reproof in particular Persons; but internal Habits don't lie open to the Discovery of Sense, which must, I think, be granted to make a very remarkable Difference between *Admonition* and *Reproof*.

An Instance may make this clearer. Suppose two Persons, who profess to be my Friends, wrote two Books, one of them a trifling Pamphlet for the Socinians, or against
this

Friendly Reproof. 23

this Government, which God created and still preserves in so marvellous a manner (I said *created*, for the late Revolution was so surprizing that the effecting of it can properly be expressed by nothing but such a Term, which denotes an instantaneous Act of the Divine Power) or, in short, in Defence of any Opinion and Faction which aims at the Destruction of Peace in Church or State, I should think it my Duty, as a Friend (I don't pretend to inform the Magistrate what is his) to rebuke him sharply for contributing so much to the Interest of the black Republick below. This is a palpable Breach of Peace, and therefore gives just Occasion of sharp Rebuke. But suppose my other Friend compos'd his Book on an useful Subject, and fit to serve the Honour and Kingdom of Christ in their Hearts, who peruse it with that Attention, Mixture of Devotion, Candor and Condescension, which becomes wise and honest Readers, I should think it very proper to forewarn this Friend against overrating himself in his own Thoughts for his Performance, or by reason of the Applause which it may be the Instrument of to him: And this I would do, as well knowing that the Devil is a very indefatigable subtle Enemy: If he can't discourage Men by Sloth, and a contracted Spirit from endeavouring
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to serve the Publick, he will, after their Service to the Publick, be flinging in some Ideas and Fancies into the Minds of Publick Benefactors; which, if they are hospitable to, will grow into that dangerous Habit *Pride*, which makes Men idle and ridiculous by their haughty Carriage, which will lessen their Reputation, and so lessen the Power of their Endeavours, by prejudicing People against their Persons: But now, if instead of *Admonishing* this Friend, I had arraign'd him of Vain-glory and Pride, as I did the other for his Heresie or Faction, I should have affronted God, by usurping that Tribunal which is proper only to Omniscience, and so by my Pride mist of doing that Good which my *Admonition* might very fairly expected to have done. In short, an Author of a Pernicious Book is an Object of *Reproof*, but an Author of a Good Book is an Object of frequent *Admonition* against Pride and Vainglory.

Fourthly and lastly, *Admonition* and *Reproof* differ, because *Admonition* is given without any degree of Displeasure, but 'tis fitting to express Displeasure in proportion to the Fault, when we tender *Reproof*. The Usefulness of *Admonition* is bottom'd upon the peccability of Human Nature: That which prompts us is Jealousie, a still and silent Passion; consequently, to be angry with a Friend,
while

Friendly Reproof. 25

while we admonish him, is to be angry with him, because he is peccable, which is very absurd; as absurd, we may be sure, as to charge God foolishly, and to note down the Defects of his Handywork: He did not make Man perfect in that sublime Sense in which he himself is perfect. That Liberty and Principle of voluntary Agency with which Man was invested as soon as he was created, is God's Work, essential to him as a human Creature, and therefore peccability or possibility of Sinning is the Work of the Creator; for a faculty of Acting Voluntarily implies a Power of a different Choice, and therefore Man's being a voluntary Agent implies that he may chuse which he will have, Life or Death, Good or Evil, for they are both set before him; that is to say, he may sin or obey, and if he is made so, that he may sin, then he is peccable, for by a peccable Creature we mean only a Creature that may sin, not a Creature that must sin.

But when we *reprove* a Friend, we are warm with Grief to see our second Self chuse Evil, when he might as well have chose the Good: 'Tis monstrous Folly to abuse Knowledge, and imploy Liberty in the Ruin of our Souls. Possibility of Sinning can by no means be remov'd from our Natures, 'till 'tis thoroughly compleated and glorified; indeed when we shall commence Saints, peccability

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will be as remote from our Beings, as possibility of becoming Holy is from the Souls of the damn'd. Nevertheless, no one necessarily commits any particular actual Sin, which cannot be deny'd, unless we suppose Man rather a *machinal* than a *voluntary* Being. Now since no one fatally commits any visible Sin, tho' we are all originally unclean from the Womb, and since Guilt is the Bane of our Being, one Friend's Fraternal Concern for another's Welfare, will not only urge him to use all loving Arts to defend his Friend against approaching Temptations, by Admonition, but moreover compels him to be troubled in his behalf, whenever he sees him worsted by them; and Guilt being a Calamity which ev'ry Man has a Hand, more or less, in pulling upon his own Head; this Grief will naturally swell into Anger, since the offending Friend might have avoided it, if he had us'd his Powers as he ought. Besides too, *Reproof* has to do with the Will, a very refractory Faculty indeed; to be sure more or less perverse after any fresh Commission, which, for that Reason, can't be handled to any purpose, *viz.* so as to be master'd in order to it's being rectified again by any but such a rough and rigid Passion as Anger is, which speaks aloud, and awakens a Friend's Sense of his Misery, and want of extraordinary Discipline and Watchfulness.

Whence

Friendly Reproof.

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Whence 'tis clear that Resentment becomes *Reproof*, tho it ill comports with *Admonition*. This may suffice concerning the difference between *Admonition* and *Reproof*. But tho' I have insisted on it some while, yet I think my self oblig'd to give notice, that I neither pretend to have given, or did at all design to give, a full account of the distinct Nature of *Admonition*, which, God assisting, shall be the Subject of a particular Treatise: But thus much I thought necessary to premise in this Place to distinguish *Reproof* from *Admonition*, because I have observ'd that those few Authors, who have been prevail'd upon to speak a little, too little, I'm sure, of *Reproof*, have confounded it with *Admonition*, which has made their Discourses about it, to say no worse, fruitless and insignificant. But since *Admonition* and *Reproof* differ in so many respects, 'tis manifest that the foremention'd Definition of *Reproof* is very imperfect, because it confounds two distinct Acts of Spiritual Beneficence, which is of a very pernicious Consequence.

For first, He that takes these two Acts for one and the same Duty, must take it also for granted, that when he has discharg'd one he has discharg'd both, so that he'll either content himself with Admonishing his Friend against complying with Temptations, without ever reproofing him for actual Comply-

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ances with them, or else he'll only reprove him for actual Transgressions of Divine Precepts, without ever admonishing him against those ill Propensions and inveterate Disorders of the inner Man, which are the sole Sources of all the Irregularities of the Tongue, and all our other active and social Faculties.

Nay, moreover, secondly, This curt Definition of Reproof, by confounding *Admonition* with it, not only affronts the Law, by lessening our Duty, and impairs human Virtue by contracting our Charity, but it also fondles one of the most scurvy Humors which disturb Conversation; for it gives a Patent to Censoriousness, even that odious, turbulent, pestilential Vice, Censoriousness: For let Admonition and Reproof be once allow'd to be the same, the pragmatcal may censure with Authority; for since a Friend may safely admonish another against such or such an ill Bias of Mind, a Man may also, according to their Notion of Reproof, innocently reprove a Person for an internal, invisible, vicious Inclination, by which Reproof he inclusively denominates him guilty, in such or such a degree of Discontent, Self-conceit, Envy, Vain-glory, or any the like malignant Disposition (I say in such or such a degree, because the subject of a particular *Reproof* must be visible enough to have it's Aggravations ponder'd, that the Resentment of the Re-

proof may be proportion'd to the Size of the Fault) which can't be done without passing Sentence upon the Heart, where none but God and Conscience have a Right to decide Cases : No Hypothesis can be found which reconciles Quarrellsomeness and Charity, Vice and Virtue, Duty and Disobedience, and attempts to make us believe that 'tis possible to please God and the Devil the same way. He who censures his Friend to extort Occasions of Reproof, tho' he should judge right, judges so but by good hap; he might as well have play'd the Slanderer, for Man is a very blind Judge of his Neighbour's Heart. Wherefore such a Method is but doing Evil that Good may come of it; 'tis to commit Sin to do our Duty, please the Devil for fear we should displease God, a very gainless Entrance upon a Christian Office without doubt. This is a necessary Caution here; for tho some are so malicious as to effect such gross and palpable Errors, yet there are others ignorant enough to be led aside and deluded through Simplicity; and doubtless 'tis not an Entanglement so inconsiderable that weak Minds can be quickly extricated from it. When *Censoriousness* and *Reproof* are dissembled to be of the same Blood, scrupulous Christians will either reject the Duty, through hatred of the Sin, or run into the Sin for love of the Duty; the latter Choice too, which

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is the worse, is most likely to be preferr'd ; for ordinary Christians, when they're cramp'd are apt to be dazl'd into Sin by the gaudy Prospect of doing a good turn, when they should stand still a little, and thereby take Care not to be impos'd on by the glittering Appearance of the stoln Robes of Zeal, lest when patient Examination has sounded the Allurement, it be discover'd to be Sin in Disguise. They are rash and turned about by Pretences, they will pretend mightily to do good by Reproof, when in Truth they reprove not at all, but only busie themselves to create Mischief and Contention, ill Words and ill Works enow by their Censoriousness.

But 2. If bare telling a Person of a real Fault, before his Face, is a perfect Definition of *Reproof*, then unmannerly Exprobration is so, for he that upbraids a Person of a Fault, must be own'd to tell him of that Fault. But alas! should we grant Upbraiding to be *Reproof*, how strangely must we needs blacken *Reproof*? What a monstrous Opinion of this excellent Duty must it needs beget in Men's Minds? for, according to this Standard, a treacherous Familiar, who blabs out the lesser Faults and Infirmities of his Friend, among his Enemies, if it be but before his Face, may be said to reprove.

Nay,

Friendly Reproof. 31

Nay, even *Solomon's Fool*, the prophane Scoffer, who makes a Mock at Sin, and hits his Friend on the Teeth with his Failings, onely to feast on his Shame, and make Pastime on his Wretchedness; this Burthen, I say, of the Community, may, with the rest too, cloak his Villany under the fine Name of Reproof. Away therefore, with a Vengeance, with such an account of Reproof which gives Sanctuary to Atheistical and Pragmatical Men.

We have hitherto been setting a Mark upon all Counterfeit *Reproof*: 'Tis Time now to seek out for some more tolerable Definition of *Reproof*, that we may rub out those Stains which some giddy Pretenders have so industriously dropt upon this excellent Duty. *Reproof then, in general, is the telling any Person of his Fault, with a peculiar Regard to the Advancement of Virtue, in such a manner as comports with his Relation to the Offender, who tells him of the Fault.* The Knowledge of the proper Methods which must be us'd to serve this great End by *Reproof*, is diverse, according to the peculiar Nature of the *Reproof*: For there are several kinds of *Reproof*, of which we must necessarily give some brief Account, before we can lay down a plain and clear Notion of *Friendly Reproof*. This therefore shall be done next.

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S E C T. III.

*Giving a brief Account of Divine Re-
proof, both General and Particular :
And Human, viz. the Civil Magistrate's
[as the Royal and Judicial] the Eccle-
siastical [as the Bishop's] the inferior
Minister's, the Husband's, Parent's,
Tutor's, the Patron's, the Master's,
Casual and Friendly Reproof consider'd,
as distinct from all the rest.*

ANother Cause which was assign'd for Men's wrong Notions of *Friendly Re-
proof*, is their confounding it with other kinds of *Reproof*. Wherefore, having, I hope, already said enough to rectifie their Conceptions of *Reproof* in general, I beg your Attention to a brief Summary of the several Sorts of *Reproof*, together with a plain account of the distinct Nature of every one of them, that you may with the greater Ease distinguish them among themselves, but especially from *Friendly Reproof*: And to prevent Offence, I hereby desire you to remember, That *Friendly Reproof* is the sole Subject of this *Essay*, and for that reason not to expect any Directions about the Management of the others.

Friendly Reproof. 33

others. I freely confess that I have no Talent, neither does it become one in my Station to offer Advice to Bishops and Magistrates, neither does the Title-page promise to give any Rules about any but *Friendly Reproof*; and I hope it can be construed Presumption in no one to pretend to understand the Duty of a Friend, since Friendship is a common Relation to all who obey Nature's Instinct to a rational Sociableness. In short, my sole Reason for mentioning the rest is, that you may discriminate this from them, lest I should seem by urging *Friendly Reproof* thus at large, without marking down the Distinctions, to confound *Clerks* and *Laymen*.

Reproof is either *Divine* or *Human*. The *Divine* is General or Particular. General, as first, the publick denunciation of God against all sin. in the Writings immediately inspir'd by his Spirit: And secondly, the Conviction of Universal Conscience, that innate Sense of the Eternal Unreasonableness of some Actions, which checks us in the doing them, and causes an Uneasiness in bad Men, in their first entrance on sinful Courses, and which tears their Minds with such terrible Lancinations, when they consider and Reflect upon their Offences. Particular, as the Checks and Convictions of ev'ry Man's particular Conscience, attended with more

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or less Horror or Remorse, according to the different Circumstances which mitigate or aggrandize the Offender's Sins, and the Measure of the Operations of the Divine Spirit, whose Incitements to Repentance in particular Hearts, may very fairly be reckon'd one sort of *Divine Reproof*. This latter is the more extraordinary *Reproof*; but 'tis hard, perhaps impossible to assign a Point where the natural Remorse terminates, and the Spiritual begins. But there is no need of insisting on the *Divine Reproof*: This cannot involuntarily be confounded with *Friendly Reproof*. I hasten therefore to speak of the *Human*.

Now *Human Reproof* is of several sorts, for there is the *Civil Magistrate's* [as the *Prince's* and the *Judge's*] the *Ecclesiastical Magistrate's* [as the *Bishop's*] the *Inferior Minister's*, the *Husband's*, the *Parent's*, the *Tutor's*, the *Patron's*, the *Master's*, *Casual* and *Friendly Reproof*.

The first that occurs is the *Civil Magistrate's Reproof*. To know the peculiar Nature, Necessity, and (by consequence) Lawfulness of *this Reproof* in general, we must consider that tho' all Sins, be they greater or less, either in Number or Quality, make ev'ry Man a worse Member of a Commonwealth than otherwise he would be, yet there are some Offences and Crimes so notorious, and which have such a fatal aspect upon

upon the Prosperity and Peace of a Kingdom, that by reason of the anomalous Tempers of some dissoluble and rapacious Wretches, there could be no safe or steady Commerce in the World, if they were not restrain'd by the Shame of Publick Cognizance and the Dread of Political Sanctions, prohibiting Vices which tend directly to the unhinging Government, and quiet Neighbourhood in the World. Without the Protection of these Laws we could not plant in Peace, or sow with Hope: We could neither enjoy the Fruit of our Hands, nor the Merits and Treasures of our Ancestors, without continual Fear of violent Usurpation, and being hastily dislodged, not only of our Possessions, but of our Bodies too, by Men of bloody and wild Desires. Now the Magistrates are the Guardians of these Faithful Guardians of our Lives and Liberties: They execute their Commands, and so act the noble part of the Patriots of the Kingdom. This is their Calling and Profession, and a great and honourable one it is: Their Reproof of such horrid Crimes is not given so much for the sake of the particular Offenders as of that Contract and Intimacy which they have enter'd into with the Laws.

The Temporal Magistrate's Reproof may be divided into *Royal* and *Judicial*.

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The Royal Reproof in our Monarchical, the best kind of, Government is, when the supreme Magistrate, either of his own accord, or in concurrence with some Resolution of that great Council and Fortrefs of the Realm, the Parliament, issues out Proclamation against such and such Vices, and threatens agreeable Penalties to be undergone by all who commit them. Now this sort of *Admonition* is General and an *Implicit* and *unfixt Reproof*, because in forbidding such and such Practices, with Menaces annexed against the Committers of them for the future, it tacitly and inclusively expresses a Displeasure against the said Practices, and all who have indulg'd themselves in them before, tho' the Persons reprov'd are unknown and unnam'd. Thus Kings are said to be *Terrors to evil doers*, attending continually upon *this very thing*, viz. to be the *avengers* of the Publick upon them who do evil, that under them we may lead peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty. Princes therefore reprove their Subjects for these Vices, as they are Fathers of their several Countries, and because they have a tender concern for the Welfare and regular Order of them. Love for Souls, Affection for Religion ought to be the Cardinal Motive of all Reproof whatsoever. But that which particularizes the *Prince's Reproof*, is his Zeal for the good of a set number of Human

Human Creatures consider'd, as they constitute the same Community. Whence it follows that the *Royal Reproof* has primarily an Eye to the Temporal Prosperity of the Reprov'd, because Communities are only capable of Temporal Rewards. They always flourish and decay at the long-run, according as Virtue or Vice has the greatest Head in them. This is unavoidable; for how otherwise shall we be able to vindicate to our poor Apprehensions God's Government and Administration of the Human Universe? What will become of the Equity of his Proceedings? *Shall not the Judge of the whole Earth do right?* Shall not he, whose Nature is the Exemplar of Virtue, confer proper Rewards on it? But if virtuous and vicious Communities can't be rewarded and punish'd hereafter, our natural Notion of God's infinite Justice obliges us to believe that Kingdoms are more or less prosperous as they are more or less virtuous; but it is evident that it is impossible for Politics, as Politics, to be judg'd, rewarded or punished after this state. For tho' Polity itself will survive it, yet the Politics that are now by reason of the different Preparations which the different individual constituent Parts of them make for the other World, will be then irreparably dissolv'd. Besides, Catholick and National Righteousness, not only by God's Blessing, but
if

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if I may so speak, by the Decree of it's own Tendency *exalts a Nation*; and, on the contrary, *Sin is*, by its natural Tendency too, *the Destruction of any People*, and supplants the Throne, by naturally centring to an opposite Point. So that it is not only the Duty, but the Interest of Princes to discourage and reprove Libertinism.

Her most Gracious Majesty (whose late Decease turn'd our Feasts into Mourning, and hung the Hearts of all those true Christians, who were true Friends to the *English Sion*, in Sackcloth) express'd a maternal Care for her Subjects in those Pious Letters which she sent to the Justices of *Middlesex*, for the vigorous carrying on a National Reformation; and I heartily wish that those whose extraordinary Judgment, eminent Stations, and other Opportunities licences them to be guilty of such an useful Presumption, as the reminding them frequently of their weighty Obligation thereunto, would pleasure his Sacred Majesty, the Tower of *Europe*, under God, by an unwearied conformity to that excellent Command: Sure I am, unless that late dismal Frown of Heaven find more success upon the Minds and Manners of the ungrateful People of this Land than the rest have found, those Catifs of Unconstancy, who can requite God's Kindness with nothing but Murmurs, will, without the Inter-

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posal of such unusual and undeserv'd Mercy, which God has display'd to this Island during the present Reign, for his Name's sake, and the sake of two such excellent Princes, apprehend something quickly, which will draw a Veil of black Darkness over their Faces. Oh! may they at last learn to be as wise in this their Day, as they are already in their own Eyes, and to prize the Peace of our Jerusalem, before Mercy is for ever hid from their Eyes.

The *Judicial Reproof* is the inferior Magistrate's *Reproof* of any Person or Persons, who are detected to be guilty of such and such Crimes, after they had been fairly forewarned against them by the *Royal Reproof*; and because that Reproof did not prove powerful enough to keep them within Bounds, the Judge or Justice inflicts some Pecuniary or Capital Punishment, or other, which may for Pain and Disgrace match the Criminal's Offence: This he is oblig'd to do, in Obedience to the supreme Magistrate, from whom he receiv'd his Commission: 'Tis his Fidelity to his Prince, which peculiarizes his Reproof.

As for *Socinians* and others, who hold Capital Punishments *Unlawful* under the *Evangelical Dispensation*, they manifestly represent the Christian Religion to introduce and abet *Anarchy*: For since all Men are

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not overaw'd into Innocence by the Belief of a future Judgment, some are too unreasonable, to let any Government be secure unless they are brib'd by the terrible Apprehension of a visible Tribunal: Nothing strikes them but what is sensible and present. Since there is so much Disorder even now, what would the World be but a *Chaos*, if such Inflictions should be laid aside? Our Blessed Lord could never design Christians to omit that Discipline which Gentiles and Jews have constantly observ'd: If Christ has ty'd up the Magistrate's Hands, so that he can't conscientiously defend innocent Subjects from the Fury and Outrage of the Injurious and Blood-thirsty, 'twill be impossible to clear the inspir'd *S. Paul* from the Guilt of a Lye, who expressly tells us, That *the Power holds not the Sword in vain*; which is such horrid Blasphemy that it can't be mention'd by any modest Christian without horror and trembling. In short, Capital Punishments and Christian Charity agree very well, since Malefactors are executed for no Crimes but those which have a direct malign Influence upon Community: For it is unreasonable to think that Charity can flourish upon the Ruins of Kingdoms. The Magistrate being thus severe to some few, is clement and equitable to the whole.

Friendly Reproof. 41

But perhaps you may admire to see the Judge's Condemnation call'd *Reproof*: But however, if we look narrowly into the Use and Design of it, 't's such, and a very terrible sort of Reproof, I confess: The good God grant that neither You nor I, Reader, may ever plunge our selves into such a Depth of Guilt as to stand in need of this *Formula*.

That the Judge's Condemnation is one sort of Reproof, will appear, if we consider, First, That no Human Condemnation is a final Condemnation: And, Secondly, That those notorious Malefactors (who, in all probability were fear'd, so as never to have come to any sense of their Spiritual Danger, and who, for that Reason, would, without the Application of the rigidest Methods always have persisted in the pernicious Course of Life, ev'ry Day growing worse and worse, till some Disaster or other had hurried them down headlong into the nethermost Hell, in a desperate and impenitent Posture of Soul) are allow'd more or less Space of Time between the Sentence of Death and the Hour of their Execution to repent in. And if we consider, Thirdly, That the finding themselves stop't, together with the Chariot-wheels of Life, in their Villanous Career, by the Magistrate's Authority, is the most likely means to incline such obdurate Wretches
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to Repentance; for if they are not utterly past feeling, this Consideration must cut deep, and work upon them, to make the best Use of their sorry *Quantum* of Time, by Restitution, Acts of Sorrow, Humiliation, Faith and Devotion. And farther, if we consider, Fourthly, That this abortive Repentance will both warn others the more solemnly, and give some Hopes of Salvation to the Offender, since we can't but grant, in the Fifth Place, That the least Degree of Penitence and Hope waiting upon such Repentance, is far better than perfect Impenitence and Despair; because tho' we should grant that it would be no Breach of Moderation to believe that this Degree of Repentance can't procure Interest enough in the Court of Heaven to get a Ticket of Jesus for their Admission into that Place, yet I can't think it a piece of Rashness to assert, That 'twill help to mitigate their Torments in Hell which does some Kindness to the Criminals, and renders them more useful Examples of Justice to the Spectators of their tragical End, whose Satisfaction, Safety and Admonition is the main End of their being executed. For the severest Infliction which does not leave those, on whom it is inflicted, wholly hopeless, as to their Eternal Happiness, and may serve to discourage Vice in those of their Fellow-Creatures, who are

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yet in a Capacity of determining God's final Sentence upon their Souls by their demeanour here, either to the Satisfaction of his infinite Justice, or the Pleasure of his infinite Mercy; which capacity all the Spectators are still presum'd to be in possession of. Nay, who knows but the eternal Incubation of God's fiery Wrath upon the Souls of the Devil and the Damn'd, after their final Condemnation, may be one great means after the Day of Judgment of the Eternal Confirmation of Angels and Saints in their State of perfect Beatitude? What will be irreversible Punishment to Fiends, will be admonition to the blest above, and probably of as great Use to the Saints and those Angels who never apostatiz'd from God, as *Reproof* was to the Saints in this preparatory State, where they got the mastery of their Corruptions. But not to digress, the Premises, I think, being seriously consider'd, the Judge's *Condemnation* of Malefactors may very properly be call'd *Reproof*. But since the Judge's *Condemnation* may be properly enough term'd *Reproof*, the inferior Inflictions of the Civil Magistrate may very properly be plac'd in the Number of Reproof, since they don't so much as include an Abbreviature of the Criminal's stay here, after which all our Endeavours to avoid the final Condemnation, or to lessen the Weight of it will be in vain.

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The *Ecclesiastick Reproof* offers it self next 'Tis two-fold. First, The Bishop's or Spiritual Magistrate's. Secondly, The Inferior Ministers. By *Episcopal Reproof* I mean the Church-Censures; the Subjects of this *Reproof* are not only enormous Crimes, the Capital Laws of the Realm, but Profaneness and avow'd Heresie, scornful Contempt of the Lord's Supper, and such like; because any who are obstinately Guilty of these Crimes, are scandalous Members of Christ's Catholick, but especially of that National Church, with which they profess Communion, and are Excommunicated by the Bishop, or punish'd by some lower Mulcts. according to the Aggravations of their Crime, by the Bishops, who are the Spiritual Fathers, and do reprove such disorderly Members thus, not only to reform them (for the blasphemous are mostly too obdurate to learn not to blaspheme) but for the Credit and Safety of that Church, over which they preside, because a desperate Disease requires a desperate Cure. But tho' the Recovery of the ejected Members is very Hopeless, yet the Honour of the Church may be secur'd. Such strict Discipline is necessary, to shew that the Immoralities and fantastick Opinions of Hypocritical and Lewd Professors are not encourag'd and seal'd by the Church, but are the
Creatures

Friendly Reproof. 45

Creatures of their own imperious Lusts and Ambitions. 'Tis necessary that Infectious Members should be branded with a Mark of Infamy, to the end others may avoid them, 'till they are got quit of their Murrain, if they are not incurable. The Ecclesiastical Magistrate's *Reproof* is an Act of Fidelity to the Church, in which he is a Provincial or Diocesan Prelate.

The Private Minister's Reproof is either his condemning any Sin or Sins in general before a whole Congregation; by which Denunciation He *Publickly*, but, nevertheless, *Indeterminately* (for this is no proper Season to apply a particular *Reproof*) reproves all there present, whose Consciences testify silently against them: Or, secondly, his reprehending particular Persons in his Parochial Circuit: 'Tis his Office to reprove both in Season and out of Season. A fervent Ardour for the Improvement of his Flock in Goodness engages him to do this: 'Tis incumbent on him upon the account of his Succession of the Pastoral Care. The chief Subjects of his *Reproof* are, His Parishioners Neglect of the Publick Worship, irreverend Behaviour in the Temple, infrequent or temerarious Celebration of the Eucharist, apparent Fruitlessness under the Ordinances, Omission of Family Devotion, neglecting to instruct their Children in the Principles of

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of Religion, indifferency as to the Minds and Manners of their Servants or Children, &c. A Minister reproveth, as the Angel or Messenger of GOD, and as the Embassador of JESUS CHRIST. He is not only the Feeder but the Inspector, Moderator and Discipliner of the Laity committed to his Tuition, according to the old Use of that known Phrase, *ποιμὴν τῆς λαῆς*; and therefore a peculiar Freedom of Speech becomes him: His Gown and unction bespeak Veneration to his *Reproof*, from Persons of all Qualities and Degrees: He may reprove often, and without Offence, and needs no familiarity with the reprov'd party beforehand, to gain him Authority, and Permission to do so.

Come we now to speak of the *Husband's* *Reproof*. The *Husband* has a Right to reprove his Wife, by virtue of the conjugal Relation. He is her Superior not only by Sex and Order of Creation (for *Adam* was first form'd, then *Eve*) but her Lord (so *Sarah* call'd *Abraham*) by Marriage. The proper Subjects of his *Reproof* are Instances of wry or profuse Management of Oeconomical or Household-Affairs: The Chief End of Marriage is to procure a Family, and to keep it regular and in decent Order. The Husband is to provide Necessaries for the Family, and when he reproveth his Wife he has a
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peculiar Eye to the good of his Family : He knows that the Manners and Welfare of his Children, Inferior Relations and Servants, that are under his Inspection, hang very much upon the good or indiscreet Conduct of his Wife, and therefore watches her Carriage the more closely, for she is Governess of the Family just as he is her Governour. Hence it is, that to be much at home, has been always reputed a great Character of a Woman.

PARENTS have a Right to reprove their Children, not only because they are inferior to 'em, but also upon the Score of a proximate and consanguineous Relation. Their *Reproofs* enter with great Advantage, and therefore, if they please, they may reprove very successfully, and do a great deal of Good with their Tongues this way, for tender Years are easily suppld. Good God ! what Cruel Monstrous Creatures are some Parents, who, tho' they are call'd upon by their own Bowels, a Tenderneſs planted in them by the immediate Hand of Nature, to correct and reprove their Children (and thereby prevent ill Customs, which take fast Possession in green Years, when their Minds are very malleable and docile, and consequently tenacious of any, but especially bad Impressions) can so unconcernedly let their Souls run to Ruin for want of due Correcti-

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on and mature *Reproof*! Parental *Reproof* is an Act of Fidelity due to Nature, and therefore the Omission of it is a horrid Crime indeed. 'Tis a hard Case that those who have not Judgment enough to make clear Distinctions between Good and Evil, should be nurs'd up for Hell, only for want of such a cheap Alms as *Reproof*, and that too from those who brought them into the World. How many Children may at the last accuse their Parents of having coupled together merely to gratifie natural Instinct? Sure such Parents don't consider that these corrupt Offsprings of theirs are obnoxious to Eternal Damnation, unless good Counsels dye their Minds betimes with good Tempers. After one overgrown Vice has beggar'd, another disgrac'd, a third diseas'd their Children, and all together have Rack'd and Tortur'd their Minds with restless Passions and ineffable, but fruitless Agonies; then you may hear them cry, That they're heartily sorry that they were so neglectful: But alas! then 'tis too late, then their own and their forlorn Posterity's Curses are the just and dire Rewards of their barbarous Fondness.

*Helleborum frustra cum jam cutis agra tumescit
Poscentes videas; venienti occurrere morbo.*

Persius.

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Friendly Reproof. 49

The best Prescripts, Preparations and Antidotes are of no use when the Poyson has impostum'd the whole Man: If you would countermine it's Rage to any purpose, withstand it's first Onsets. Dangerous Diseases must be strangled in Infancy; for when those venomous Seeds which seem small and contemptible at first, have been long let alone, 'till they are grown and multiplied, they become too sturdy and masterless to be subdued. Ev'ry Fault in Youth is a Pestilence in Embryo; and ev'ry Repetition of the same Fault is a Step to a vicious Habit, and ev'ry vicious Habit is the Addition of a Round to an Eternal State of Hostility with God.

Nemo repente fuit turpissimus.

Juv.

There was never such a thing as an upstart Devil. A Creature is an effect appropriate to Omnipotence, and therefore tho' there's no need of Omnipotence to uncreate a Creature, yet no Being can uncreate himself in a Moment; and since a high degree of Wickedness ripens a Soul for Hell, where they become the Devil's Vassals for ever, and consequently cease to be God's Creatures, with those Devils who tyrannize over them, a presumptuous State of Wicked-

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ness can't possibly be a sudden Attainment. Wise Parents therefore will rather take care to stifle Sin in it's Birth than despise the least Beginnings of Vice, since a budding Vice may be crop'd with Ease by the Hand, which when 'tis become inveterate will require the Aid of Spade and Mattock, and the Cost of a great deal of Sweat before it be rooted up.

TUTORS are the Vice-parents of their Pupils, and therefore by reproofing them they not only consult the Honour of their own Instructions and Methods of Education, but also approve themselves faithful both in the Sight of God and Men, to their natural Parents, who trust their Children in their Hands; which is the chief Circumstance that specifies a Tutor's *Reproof*.

PATRONS reprove their Dependents chiefly, for the sake of their own Beneficence. By so doing they act the faithful Purifiers of God: They manifest that they don't give partially, prodigally and at Random, or purely in Obedience to a pliable Temper, without being the least solicitous for benefitting their Country by their Bounty. They thereby shew that 'tis their Endeavour and Ambition to bestow a polite Education on such whose rich Advances in Knowledge and Virtue promise brave Servants to the Church and State.

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Friendly Reproof.

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MASTERS hold a Right of Reproving their Servants by their Servant's voluntary Submission of themselves to their Dictates and Commands. 'Twas their own and their Parents Contract, That they should live in Obedience. 'Tis from their Masters that they learn to get a handsome Subsistence in the World, by Skill and Industry in some honest Calling; and therefore 'tis great Folly and Ingratitude in them to be stubborn and surly when they are reprov'd. The Christian Doctrine assures us, That Servants should be subject, not only to the good and gentle, but even to froward Masters, and construes it no Glory (so easie and fitting is it) to be patient when they are chastiz'd for their Faults. But if Stripes and Buffetings are patiently to be born with, much more ought Medicinal Reproofs be contentedly receiv'd, since their Masters are oblig'd in Point of Fidelity, Duty, Care and Love to reprove them.

All the foremention'd sorts of *Reproof* are special relative Duties, and of a very solemn Nature; and so far *Friendly Reproof* agrees with them. But there remains one sort of *Reproof* more, of which we must say something before we can conveniently speak of the *Reproof* of a *Friend*, which differs from all the rest, and that is *Casual Reproof*.

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Reproof may be call'd *Casual* when the Re-prover neither reprov'es as a *Magistrate*, nor as a *Minister*, nor as a *Husband*, nor as a *Parent*, nor as a *Tutor*, nor as a *Patron*, nor as a *Master*: In short, upon no other Obligation or Relation than those general ones of the *Man*, the *Fellow-Creature*, and the *Christian*. 'Tis call'd *Casual*, because 'tis given by Chance, without Fore-thought, nay sometimes without knowing what the Person is whom we reprove: There is no Plot laid beforehand, no Season pitch'd upon, no Opportunity watch'd for; but the Offender is reprov'd without Stratagem and Preface upon the Spot. The Subjects of this Reproof are (to use *S. Paul's* Phrase) *works of Darknes*; that is to say, Words and Actions which are not fit or tolerable to be spoke in Company, or to be done in the Sight of the Sun; such as are too offensive to be born with by the Light, unless among the Scum or brutisher Part of Mankind. Of this Nature are all Filthy and Unclean Hints, Lascivious Motions, rash Oaths, hellish Blasphemies and Execrations, prophane Derision of the Sacred Scriptures, consecrated Places, dedicated Men or sanctified Days. There is but little Hope of such Persons being reform'd by such Reproof, and therefore they are not reprov'd so much for their own sakes as for the Company's good and Admonition:

nition: A Man must express his Abhorrence of Atheism and Licentious Talk, as he is but a sociable Creature; for there can be no continuance of sound Society, unless such exorbitant Tenets and Practices are openly and unexceptionably discourag'd and exploded in all Company. These are the horrid Sins in which the Apostle so far disallows of our Partaking with the Committers of them, that he commands us to reprove the Haughty and Scornful Abettors of them, who shake Hands with Wisdom to pass for Wits; and indeed, not to reprove them, is in some degrees to be Partakers of their Sins. Silence, without doubt, is Connivance in such a Case, and therefore a perillous Omission of one of the main positive Duties of the Tongue. What Love can that Man have for exemplary Virtue, who does not find himself provok'd by such notorious Vice, and freely vent his Abhorrence of detestable, barefac'd and impudent Wickedness, when God and Religion are made Themes of Jest and scurrilous Raillery? 'Tis true, there is a furious and over-hasty Zeal, which is devoid of Prudence, and therefore not commendable; but 'tis also certainly true that there is a publick and generous Zeal, that is consistent with Civility, Prudence and good Manners. Lukewarm People may talk as they please, and harangue very much in Commendation

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of Prudence, whilst, in the mean while they don't so much as understand wherein true Prudence consists.

PRUDENCE is the wary and practical Application of that Degree of Wisdom, which we have in the industrious Promotion of those Designs which we are most ambitious to see accomplish'd. The Difference between Wisdom and Prudence is this. Wisdom is Knowledge, as it is treasur'd up and lies unactive in the Intellect. Prudence is the eliciting it into Action, the seasonable Use of it upon any Emergency. And indeed this practical Faculty of Circumspection is us'd to different Purposes, according to our different Degrees of Faith. Those whose Belief and Assent flows solely from their Eyes, that is to say, who are purely sensual, employ it to dishonest Ends, to gratifie their Inclinations, to enjoy those things which seem beautiful and lovely to the Senses, such as Covetousness, Ambition and Vain-glory, because the praise of Men pleases our Ears, and a Heap of Riches is pleasant to the Eye. Now their dextrous Use of this comparative Faculty to such Ends is, properly speaking, nothing but Carnal, Unlawful Prudence, or, to express it in one Word, Craft, which proceeds from a culpable Self-love, a partial Love of themselves, consider'd abstractly from the Human Community

munity, merely as they are sensitive Creatures, and ally'd to Brutes. Such Men act with a sole regard to that gross Body which they will wear only in this perishing State; and therefore will do nothing which tends at present to the diminishing their Wealth or the Shipwreck of their Reputation with the Crowd (which, if we would please in an Age when most are lewd, we must omit many Duties, the Observance of which would promote the Honour of God, and the Spiritual Grandeur of our own Minds) tho' indeed they will many times scorn the good Opinion of their Fellow-Creatures, if they can't enjoy it, and some vile Gratification at the same Time: And without Doubt their Sentence must be dreadful at the last Day, who think that Credit is too costly a Victim to be devoted to God, which they can very readily sacrifice to their own Lusts. But those whose Faith is more extensive, and is freed from the Fetters of Sense, who have a commanding Sense of the Divine Excellencies, whose Understandings and Expectations are made more spacious by the Prospect of a future State, who really believe that God is a Spirit, and that the Similitude of God is stamp'd on that part of their being, which is so bright and fine that it escapes the Sight of our bodily Eyes. Those, those, I say, subject the Estimation of their Body

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to that of their Soul, and, in short, make their Temporal seeming Interest give way for the Advancement of Religion, and the continuance of the Honour and Complacence of God with them, in which their real and eternal Interest is wrapp'd up. In them the Use of their natural Faculty of comparing Circumstances is, in the Dialect of God and Nature call'd Prudence. Immoderate Lovers of Self abuse this Faculty: They who love themselves subordinately to the Love of God, that is to say, love themselves not as sole, separate, independent Beings, but as being related to God and his Creation, use it wisely and religiously. We are in the first Place to take care that our Love of God be the supreme Love, that we may ply all our Faculties to his Glory, like truly affectionate Creatures; and since *Reproof* may promote his Glory, we are to reprove. Now the knowing and being fully satisfied that the Promotion of his Glory ought to be our first Aim and chief Endeavour, is *Wisdom*. Moreover, since he is a God of Order and Season in his Works, and has invested Humanity with a proper Faculty to distinguish Circumstances and Seasons, that our wise Ends and Endeavours may prove successful, 'tis incumbent upon us not only to reprove, but to take Care to reprove at fit Times and in a fit manner, which

which is the Exertion of Prudence. And whenever we reprove without due regard to Season, tho' our *Reproof* may prove as clear from carnal Prudence, and shews that we have more regard for the Universal Reputation of Religion than our own private Esteem among others; yet we may very properly then be said to be imprudent, and thus a Man may be wise without Prudence. On the contrary, those who don't reprove when they might have done it, without any Breach of what Reason calls Civility, being carnally prudent, may very well be said to be prudent without Wisdom. But the truly circumspect Christian is both wise and prudent: He will nether let the Offender escape his Reproof, nor reprove an Offender in the height of Passion, or when his Faculties are supplanted by Intemperance, not because Reproof will displease them then (for the Wicked are displeased with it when they are sober) but because if he consult the Nature of things he can't but know that in such a case no good purpose can be answer'd by the hazzarding his Reputation, and that unseasonable and misapply'd Reproofs (especially if they are of a casual nature) do more Mischief to the Credit of the Duty it self than could have been satisfied for by all the Good which it might have done, tho' it had been well manag'd, and crown'd with desir-

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table Success. But now I am speaking of Season, I must inform you, That your Rules of Seasonableness must be fetch'd from the Dictates of Nature, not from the unconstant deprav'd Humors of some Men, for he that thus observes the Wind shall not sow. We are not to reprove only where we foresee it will probably find a welcom access, or omit this Duty upon the prospect of probably being reproach'd for it: But our Care ought to be this, never to reprove where or when some Circumstances consider'd, our Reproof, by being a greater Breach of Decency than it can possibly be an Act of Duty, will be not merely in the Opinions of ill Men, but by the Laws of Nature Reproach-worthy. A rash Reproof represents a Man inconsistent with himself, because it represents him an extraordinary forward Zealor, before he has learn'd to shew himself a Man by Consideration, which is to invert the Order of God and Nature: For Consideration is one of the first Virtues, in order, and his Zeal can't be well founded, who is destitute of it; so that the Rashness demonstrates that Zeal to be ill grounded, which the Reproof seems to express. To which give me Leave to add, That the Observance of Caution and Season in giving *Reproof* will free us from being charg'd with Vain-glory and Arrogance by any candid or sedate

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date Christian for our *Reproof*. In short, We must first be sure to have excellent Aims, and then study to serve them by proper means. But tho' we are not to reprove every Person whom we know to be a scandalous Sinner, or one who is superior to us in Age, quality or Function, yet we may reprove any one to whom we are equal enough to be their Companion, if they do any thing that is scandalous while we are in their Company. The Canons of common Civility will Authorize us to reprove them: We may, without committing any Solecism in Address, beg their Silence, and freely vent our Displeasure. For if we are equal enough to be Companions, we are in mutual Society sociable upon equal Terms, and on the same Conditions: And therefore ev'ry Companion may speak his Mind in his Turn, and take notice of what offends him, without ministring any just occasion of Offence, how ill soever Men, that have no Sense of the excellent Nature of Charity to their Souls, may be apt to take it. Why may not good Men consult their lawful Ease and Liberty as well as the Licentious? We may easily level the Matter, by but putting the Case plainly. Should a well-meaning Christian be so imprudently zealous (when he has by Chance or Necessity fell into some Company who have little or no Love
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for Goodness, or perhaps are bitter and sacramental Enemies to it) as to offer at a Discourse about Angels, the future Judgment, the Benefit of Contemplation and heavenly Things, Self-reflection, or some extraordinary Favours with which the Holy Ghost has oblig'd his Soul, or any sublime and practical Topicks which such vitiated Palates cann't relish without Disgust, and ought only to be introduc'd in select Conversation and extraordinary Times, when our Minds are best season'd, would they not presently begin to hiss, and bid him leave off Canting, and tell him that was not a Place to preach in! I don't question they'd presently inform him, without thinking it any Invasion upon Decency, that he did but expose himself to them by so doing. Why then may not a fervent Christian, when his Sacred Ears are assaulted with Curses, Blasphemy and Obscenity, modestly beg the Favour not to be detain'd and disturb'd with their Sins and Follies, and tell them he takes such Demeanour as an Affront, and for that Reason desire them to compound to talk about something that is useful, which is neither sinful in its own Nature, nor has an immediate Tendency to heavenly things, lyes between two Extremes, and will profit both without offending either? When the Prophane are very unseasonably Wicked, a good Christi-

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an's exemplary Life constitutes him their Superior, and the Minister's Deputy upon the Account of his Innocence, and for that Reason authorizes him to reprove them, without waiting for a privater Season. Uncommon Impudence makes an uncommon and publick Reproof a just Correction of the reprov'd, and a seasonable Act in the Companion who reproves, tho' he's no farther related to him than as he partakes of Human Nature, has been baptiz'd, and is but a casual Companion at the instant of the Reproof: And therefore, to omit Reproof at such a Time is to neglect a decent Opportunity of expressing our Zeal for God's Honour, and therefore is as blameable as to have no regard for Season at all. In short, we must remember that Prudence has its Boundaries as well as Zeal, and it requires as much Spiritual Judgment to assign the proper Limits of the one as of the other: 'Tis as necessary to have Zeal enough to say to the Soul, *Hitherto thou shalt go*, as it is to have Prudence to add, *no farther*. Where there is no Zeal for God, our Prudence can't be Spiritual and Christian. Luxuriant, or, to speak more properly, an unseasonable Exertion of Zeal makes a Man prodigal of Indiscreet Reproofs, and carnal Caution makes him too stingy, and therefore Prudence without Zeal is as certainly sinful as Zeal that

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that is not rein'd by Prudence, is but a false Image of Divine Love, and which rather ought to be reputed a Zeal that is molten by some excessive Heat of an inconsiderate Brain, than the genuine emanation of Christian Charity. Is not therefore the Epidemical Omission of this Duty, my Christian Countrey-men, a great Fault in you? Casual Reproof may silence if not reform; make Wretches less contagious to others, tho' not less wise and religious themselves. I dare be positive, that wicked Men, how brazen soever the ill Complexions of their Minds may be, would not have such callous Countenances, if the Virtuons did but assume their rightful Boldness. Vice would not sneak and lower it's Head by Degrees, just as it got Ground through the Neglect of this Duty. But you may tell me, That the Custom of casual Reproof is antiquated and quite out of date now, and therefore to bring it up would look ridiculous, and expose those who should attempt it. But give me leave to acquaint thee, Christian, that tho' the Heavens themselves will be shrivel'd like Parchment before the Fire, yet Reason, and that God, who is the Author of Reason, and has made this a Duty, will never grow old: No, as he always was and still is, so he will be always omnipotent and immutable; for which Reason they that trample upon his

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Laws cannot escape his Wrath, unless they repent, whilst Repentance and Reproof will be accepted, and will contribute to the eternal Felicity of Human Creatures. If the Herd are so brutish as to despise, through Ignorance or Wickedness such an excellent Duty, the wise and sincere Professors of the Religion of the Blessed Jesus have the more Reason to exercise casual Reproof, since there is such a great and lamentable Necessity for it. You, I speak to, the brave and generous Disciples of my once Crucified, but now Glorified Lord, are hereby call'd to sacrifice your Temporal Credit for Christ, and that Virtue of which he was both the Principal Pattern and Patron, and will you shamefully desert 'em in a Time of Extremity? Do you really believe, that he, who, many hundred Years ago, said these Words, *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my name's sake: Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven,* knew what a weighty Truth he spake? Cowardise and Inconsideration may, but a Heart's Affection for Religion will never away with the Neglect of Casual Reproof. Where is your Faith and Christian Magnanimity, who are so basely ashamed of Christ's Cause? One that can't patiently bear with the Frowardness of Ignorant and Malicious

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Malicious Men, may assure himself without the Gift of Prophecy, that he is not arm'd with a Spirit of Martyrdom against those Storms and Tempests which may one Day sift his Faith. If you deny and are asham'd of Christ before Men, he will disown and be asham'd of you also before his Father, Angels and Men at the last. Measures of Decency are not as in Matters of common Actions which relate to this Life, to be taken in matters of Duty and Religion, from the Notions and Customs of the *most*, because it may be safely said, That the most have always been the worst. Singular Examples are not fit to be constant and universal Rules, much less the Lives of the Common. If you think that we must act with the most always, for the sake of Peaceableness, why don't you lye and equivocate, carry your selves irreverently in God's House, trifle with the tremendous Name, turn your Backs upon the Altar of Divine Love, and such like, since the most do so? Reprove therefore the Works of Darknes. When one stands up in the behalf of Virtue the rest will in all likelihood back and second him; but if the Company should be mute, may hiss and revile you, they'l cancel their Scoffs when the Pitcher is broken at the Fountain, and the Wheel at the Cistern, when the Evil Days come and the Years draw nigh; and they shall

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shall say, We have no Pleasure in them. Farther, This is the surest way to be rid of their troublesome Company: 'Twill be Matter of Comfort too, to reflect that a Duty has been discharg'd, a Duty too, which is in a great measure expensive of our Reputation, the dearest to good Men of all Temporal Goods, in an Age wherein Virtue is made matter of Satyr. However, 'tis neither Sin nor Folly, Dissociableness nor Incivility to offend those who will construe the greatest Kindnesses Offences, and whom we can't please without committing Sin, without the Loss of God's Favour, deserting Virtue's good Name when 'tis assassin'd, and without the Decay of our own Soul's Health. Do your Duty therefore cheerfully and doubt not, notwithstanding the Wicked may now call your *Life Madness*, that *Wisdom will be justified of her Children*.

This may suffice to suggest the use of this sort of Reproof, and of all the rest. I could willingly speak more largely of the latter, but *Friendly Reproof* is what I undertook to handle particularly now, and the true Reason why I have insisted upon the other was to remove Men's gross Errors about it. I think my self very happy that they have let me arrive, tho with so much Trouble and Difficulty, to the Harbour of
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my Wishes, and the most delicious Entertainment of my Thoughts. Now we may enjoy our selves without the least Alloy of Controversie, and of any but affected Misconstruction. Now *Friendly Reproof*, a golden and lovely Subject indeed; that great, but despis'd Benefactor of Religion, is ready to receive our eager Embraces.

Now *Friendly Reproof* is the Reproof given by a Friend to a Friend. The particular End of this Reproof is the Perfection of the Soul of that individual who is reprov'd. One peculiar Property of it is it's being always given privately. It may happen indeed that a Friend may need to be reprov'd in Publick; but then he is reprov'd, in such a case, upon the account of some more extensive Relation than that of a Friend. And as none but a Friend is the Object of *Friendly Reproof*, and none but a Friend can properly give it, so the Subjects of it are not only gross Faults, but even Specks and less discernible Failures: For the Considerate would have their Friends not only abstain from heinous Sins, but from all Appearances and Beginnings of Evil. 'Tis their flaming Ambition that their Friends may not only not be legible Pictures of the great Enemy of Souls, but that they may ev'ry Day lay aside ev'ry Incumbrance, and grow nearer and nearer to the Nature of good Angels. This sort of Reproof is gi-

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ven with an extraordinary Affection, a peculiar Force and Stream of Benevolence. 'Tis an Act of Fidelity in him that reproves to his own Trust, Pretences and Contract; an Act of Love and Gratitude to the Manhood of the reprov'd consider'd as his peculiar Fellow-Helper and Well-Wisher.

Hitherto we have been taken up with the distinguishing the particular Kinds of Reproof, the neglect of which has been one main Fountain of erroneous Judgments about the Nature of *Friendly Reproof*; for how many shall you hear excusing themselves for not reproving their Friends, because they are neither Magistrates nor Ministers whose Duty it is to reprove? whereas had these Persons but observed this Distinction, they would have known that it was one thing to reprove as a Magistrate, or a Minister, and another to reprove as a Friend.

I shall conclude this Chapter with two Observations.

The first of which is, That sometimes several of these sorts of Reproof may be coincident in the same Person: Thus, to give one very plain Instance, a Bishop may reprove a Sin before a whole Congregation, in the hearing of a particular Friend of his, to which this Friend is very much addicted: Here he reproves him in general, and indeterminately, as a Minister. After Sermon
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he, in the next Place, knowing this Friend to be guilty of the Sin, goes and reproves him for it privately and particularly as a Friend. But if, notwithstanding his repeated Rebukes, and the application of other prudent Methods, to recover him, his Friend repeats and repeats this Sin, so long till by degrees it betrays him into more heinous Commissions, and he by that means prove a scandalous Example, the Bishop is oblig'd to excommunicate this dear Friend, as he would conscientiously discharge the Duty of a Spiritual or Ecclesiastical Magistrate. But tho' they may be coincident in Cases of this Nature, yet for the most part they are not so, and Error being harder to be detected than Truth is to be discover'd, 'twas necessary in an Engagement with prejudic'd Persons that our Entrance into this Subject might be made the smoother to speak of ev'ry one of them apart, and to mark down the particular Characteristicks of all of them distinctly.

But, secondly, to conclude this Chapter, since there are different Uses of different kinds of *Reproof*, 'tis evident that the Reformation and Improvement of the reprov'd Person (tho' 'tis always to be charitably wish'd and hop'd for) is not the sole End of all *Reproof*. Whence it follows, That though a Man could be safely
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confident (which can't be without a Presumption, and a Violation of Charity, *which*, as *S. Paul* acquaints us, *hopes all things*) that an Offender, whom he has a Right to reprove upon some of the precedent Accounts, will be never the better for his Reproof, yet this can be no safe Pretext for his omission of it, in not making a patient Experiment upon such an Offender, since his Reproof may, supposing the worst, be often instrumental to the promotion of Virtue in other Respects, as has been shewn in the Case of casual Reproof, the Temporal Magistrate's Condemnation, and the Spiritual Magistrate's Excommunication, which is the principal End of all *Reproof* whatsoever, taken at large.

C H A P. III.

Shewing Friendly Reproof
both a Natural and Revealed
Duty.

S E C T. I.

Entrance into the Chapter.

CARE has been taken to disburthen Men's Minds of all dark and confus'd Notions of *Friendly Reproof*; so that I hope now I may proceed chearfully and in good Order to prove it of such a Nature as to oblige the Conscience to the diligent Exercise of it. Which I have the rather chose to do, because I think my self bound by a Principle of Charity to impute the Neglect of this Duty in the better sorts of the Professors of Christianity, to their not being throughly convinc'd that *Friendly Reproof* is

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is a Duty and Obligatory of the Conscience.

Now there are only two ways whereby we can know whether or no any Action is a Duty, and these are *Reason* and *Revelation*.

Wherefore I shall shew,

- I. That the Light of Nature discovers *Friendly Reproof* to be a Human Duty. And,
- II. That the Inspir'd Writings testify *Friendly Reproof* to be a Christian Duty.

S E C T II.

Friendly Reproof prov'd a Natural or Human Duty.

I Am first to prove from Reason, or the Primitive Light of Nature, that *Friendly Reproof* is a Duty.

Now if it can be demonstrated, That,
1. Friendship is a Natural Relation, that is to say, A Relation which Man by Nature stands in need of. And, 2. That no Man can discharge the Duty of a Man in the Relation of Friendship, without reproving his Friend sometimes ; then questionless *Friendly Reproof* is a Natural and Human Duty. Now
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the Truth of both these Propositions I dare undertake to prove.

And first, I prove that Friendship is a Natural Relation. Our unavoidable Dependence on one another in this State, so full of Dangers and pregnant of Necessities, which are too many and too tough to be conquer'd and forestall'd by the wisest, strongest and most industrious Man's solitary Powers, continually minds us that we are sociable Creatures by Nature. This common Principle of Sociableness is the universal Cement of all Mankind: Deserts are too inhospitable to Man to be measur'd out for his Abode. But tho' all Men are sociable Creatures by Nature, yet it is impossible for any Man to assist and associate with all Men any otherwise than as they form one Human Polity, one Rational Orb. All Men can't be helpful to all Men *personally*, tho' in relieving any Man they should be *intentionally*, and are, *ipso facto*, *centrally* assistant to all Men. Our Benevolence may extend to all, tho' our Beneficence cannot. Nevertheless, ev'ry Man has a Power to be actually Helpful to a small Number of his Fellow Creatures, more or less, this way or that way, and some most, I might have said all ways, according to the Stature and Capacity of their different Faculties, and the different Vigour and Tendency of their several Genius's. Thus,

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by the communicative Powers of individuals in different Employments all necessary Services are upheld, and all carry on the same End, their own comfortable Subsistence and the support of the whole Human Corporation: By the happy Concurrencies of ev'ry distinct few in the Aiding of a few, all Men become in the End the Auxiliaries of all Men, consider'd as they are clad with the same Nature and Members of the whole Human Universe. Hence it was that the World was no sooner stock'd with Inhabitants, but Men very willingly, from the beginning of the World even to this Day, agreed to channel themselves into Empires, Kingdoms, Shires, Cities, Towns, Neighbourhoods and innumerable other less Societies and Branches of Polity. 'Tis also this Necessity which is the Foundation of personal Relations. Civil Magistrates are necessary to preserve distinct Bodies and Governments from Disorder and Ruin. Marriages are necessary to erect a new Posterity in ev'ry Age, and for the more careful Education of Children. The Relation of Masters and Servants is necessary too for the Continuance and Improvement of all useful Arts and Sciences, which are Instruments of Subsistence, Ornament and Convenience, to both our Minds and Bodies.

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But since none of these Relations and Distinctions of Magistrate and Plebeian, Husband and Wife, Parent and Child, Master and Servant allow special equality enough in their Correlates to admit of that Intimacy which ev'ry Man's want of Consultation in Doubts, and those numerous Straits and Dangers which Men of all Vocations and in all Circumstances are expos'd to, together with ev'ry Man's natural eagerness to empty his Bosom of his secret Joys and Grievances require, Nature is bound, upon Peril of being reproach'd, together with that God who is the Author of Nature, for having made Man his own Burthen, and the supreme Species of all sublunary Creatures, utterly incapable of moderate Comfort, to procure him another Correlate. 'Tis true, a Man and his Wife are so near that they may, in one Sense be said to be one: They have the same Family and Main Chance to take Care of, but they drive on this same End different ways. Women are not fit to give counsel, nor, generally speaking, able to lend a helping Hand in Masculine Affairs; and yet the Woman's Part may be play'd well enough. Besides, a Wife is seldom so discreet as she should be, and very few Men will trust their Wives with the Key of their Bosom, because they know that 'tis not convenient for ev'ry one to see what is laid up in that Clo-

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set. Nay, should a Wife be an extraordinary Woman and a great Blessing (which few now-a-days are) so as to serve not only for a Wife, but for a Friend, yet she is but one; and he that has her would do well to prize her; and if she be Loving and Peaceable, and keep a strict Eye over her Family, supposing she be far from being such an extraordinary Wife, she is nevertheless to be cherish'd and belov'd, since she is, notwithstanding, a good Wife, because Strength of Thought, a severe Discipline of Tongue, and strong Hands are not common to the Female Sex. But to return, be she ever so extraordinary, as I have before said, she is but one, and one assistant cannot be rely'd on: One Person's Counsel will not suffice to furnish a Man with Prudence, and to mould his Mind into a just equanimity in all Emergencies. Man's Affairs are not establish'd either by one or by a multitude of, but by two or three, private Counsellors. Whosoever therefore are not so unusually Happy as to have wise Brethren by Blood, that are born for Adversity, must adopt the sincerest and prudentest Equals they can get acquainted with for their Brethren; those Brethren, I mean, who are commonly call'd Friends; who will joyn *Heads*, and *Hearts*, and *Hands*, not only in Prosperity, but when Storms and Tempests do induce Melancholy

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and Terror, and Fearfulness, and Trembling, get fast hold of our Spirits, who (as my Lord *Verulam* has excellently well observ'd) *redouble our Joys and split our Griefs in two*, who (than which I can't add a greater Encomium) as *Solomon* acquaints, *do stick closer to one another than Brother to Brother*. In short, Friendship is so necessary to make our Joys real and permanent, and to pillar up our Spirits in gloomy Days (which will certainly come in their turns) that Reverence to Nature obliges us to believe that Friendship is a Natural Relation.

II. The second Proposition to be prov'd, is this. No Man can discharge the Duty of a Man in the Relation of Friendship without his reproofing his Friend sometimes.

To render this Truth apparent, 'tis requisite, and accordingly I desire you to consider these three things.

1. That *Reproof* is a great Act of Kindness.

2. That 'tis an Act of Kindness, which ev'ry Man stands more or less in need of.

3. 'Tis an Act of Kindness, that ev'ry Man is capable of doing for his Friend.

I. First,

r. First, I say, We should consider, That *Reproof* is a great Act of Kindness.

Natural Light informs us very clearly, and common Experience witnesses that there are Actions and Habits, which gall Man's Mind, cheapen his Name, waste his Estate, impair his Health, straiten his Faculties, and make him lavish of that Time which was given him to improve his being in: And farther, Natural Light does as clearly satisfy us that such Actions and Habits are Hurtful and Evil to Man: Neither God nor Nature can approve of, nay not condemn what disquiets us and serves no good End: Of this kind are all Extremes, as *immoderate Sleep, Eating, Drinking, Sociableness, Solitude, Talking, Admiration, Grief, Joy, Anger*, and the like. Agreeably the Heathens themselves seated all Virtue in general and Mediocrity: *Medio tutissimus ibis* is a Proverb in ev'ry School-Boy's Mouth: So far they were very well acquainted with the Nature of Human Virtue.

But since we can find by the natural Tendency of these Actions and Habits, that they are so many ways hurtful to us, the Bane and Burthen of our being, we must grant that the Removal and Prevention of such Habits and Actions is a great Act of Human Kindness. For certainly nothing is a great

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Act of Kindness if that is not such which contributes in a great Measure to the Health of our Bodies, the Peace of our Consciences, the Preservation of our Credit, the regular Steerage of our Faculties, and finally the wise Dispensation of all our Time, to the Advancement always, more or less of our entire Man.

Now Private and *Friendly Reproof* does contribute very much to the Removal of such Habits and Actions. The removal of them is the only Aim of *Friendly Reproof*; and truly 'tis a means as fair as any for Success in such an Attempt. For Reproof is always given with some Signs of uneasiness, and ev'ry Man highly valuing one whom he takes to be his sincere Friend, reveres his Displeasure. The Expression of Anger in his Friend makes the reprov'd Person conclude with himself, That that Fault which causes such Anger in his cordial well-wisher can be no such inconsiderable Evil as an inconsiderate Sinner, is apt to think it; which Conclusion excites Remorse for it: And pungent Reflections create a Horror of it for the future, and that Horror makes him seal the Will with firm Resolutions against it, which is the most likely way to guard the Soul against all the Attempts of the Devil. By this Method, if his Fault was a single Act of any particular Sin, the Seeds of an ill Habit are choak'd; but

but if the Sin for which he was reprov'd was habitual, this Reproof will animate him to labour with all his Might by Severities upon himself and Consultation with others, and, above all, by frequent and earnest Addresses to the Throne of Grace, to demolish the strong Holds of the Devil. What is there so difficult that a Man will not assay, in order to keep up the Love and favourable Opinion of his Friend, who by daily Endearments and Obligations does manifest his Kindness to be real and hearty? and sure Sins, if they are view'd when the Mind is in it's Meridian, will not appear to the sedate Thoughts so lovely that a Friend should rather be parted with than them. If a Friend has little Love for his Soul, from a brutish Ignorance of it's Worth, yet a Friend's Displeasure may force him to shake Hands with a Vice and his Darling Vicetoo, perhaps.

2. But secondly, As a Friend's *Reproof* is a great Act of Kindness, so 'tis an Act of Kindness which ev'ry one, more or less, stands in need of.

A Good and Circumspect Man may live above the *Magistrate's Reproof*, nay out of the Reach of the envenom'd Arrows of hellish Tongues, and above the Comments of the Envious and Pragmatical, and yet be girt about with many dangerous Infirmities, which

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his Friend, who is often with him, can easily spy out. There is not that wariest Man alive who offends not: *The righteous*, it seems, *offends seven times a day*, that is to say, frequently, but then this must be explain'd rather of invisible than visible Faults. Nevertheless the best Men have their visible Faults, even those that are Lights to the World have their Spots and Littlenesses, which those who are often near and intent upon them, may easily discern and count up without a Pick-fault Inclination. They are Lectures of Humility to great Examples. Where is the Man that is perfectly Innocent and Virtuous, to omit the Refinements of the Gospel, in Nature's and a second Man's Eyes? But tho' the best Men confine upon, nay slip into some of those Extrems which are the Pests of Humanity, yet it was not convenient that all the Miseries and Deformities of good Souls in this State, should be uncurtain'd to the Crowd, because then the Reputation of the brightest Example of Virtue would suffer a very dismal Cloud, and so miss of that Efficacy it has upon ordinary Spectators. But tho' if those lesser Faults were visible to all that transiently behold them, the Lustre of their Credits would be eclips'd in the Eyes of the World, yet God and Friends, can have Generosity enough to

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Pity, Heal and Pardon those retir'd Infirmities, without being alienated from the Patient. And indeed since we cannot say he is happiest who offends not at all, because this is absurdly to suppose what never will be, since no Man ever was, is, or will be so happy in this State, as not to offend at all; we must be content to say, He is the happiest Man who offends least. This is an Ambition which every Man should suffer to bear the Sceptre in his own Breast. Now that this sort of Ambition in our Friends may be answer'd, we should acquaint them with those Faults which are visible to us: For indeed many of good Men's smallest Faults are not so discernible to themselves as to their Friends; so that unless those who are oftenest with, and profess Kindness for them, tell them of their Faults, which they note in them, they will in all probability escape their Cognizance, and consequently their Vigilance, whereby they are depriv'd of being so many degrees nearer to perfection. But I am sure if the best Men stand in need of *Friendly Reproof*, others, but especially those who deserve *Casual* and severer *Reproofs*, stand much more in need of *Friendly Reproof*. The natural Corollary of which is, that all Men consider'd in their present Capacity of but *Candidates*, not *Masters* of rational Perfection, are the Objects of the Relief of *Friendly Reproof*.

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3. But thirdly, *Friendly Reproof* is an Act of Kindness which ev'ry Man is capable of doing for his Friend.

We have all, even the Ignorantest of us, a natural Capacity to perceive the Eternal Unreasonableness and intrinsically evil Nature of some Actions and Habits. Happy, happy should we all be, if we did but constantly avoid the Commission of all those Sins, which because of their Ugliness and Deformity we can't avoid knowing to be Sins. And as the Sense of the chief Subjects of Reprehension is wrought in our Understandings by Nature, so we have also a natural Aptness and Sagacity to see these Extremes sooner and better in others than in our selves. There is a due Distance of the Object, and a due hatred of the Sin which we see: Self-love and Partiality don't blind and corrupt our Judgments Abroad as they do at Home. Jealousie for our Friend's Welfare, Hatred of Sin in him, and frequent Converse with him make us very quick-sighted; and when a Fault does but shew it's Head, our Capacity of being angry is presently kindled; which Passion of Anger, we need not doubt was planted in us by Nature to serve some good End. Farther, That Volubility of Tongue which is ev'ry Man's Talent when the Thoughts of others are the Theme of our Discourse,

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broaches our Breasts all on a sudden, when they are stung with Grief for our Friend. Anger and Grief are very necessary Tools for the rough Work of *Reproof*, which to set about is so ungrateful to us (where observe, that I do not mean 'tis ungrateful to rail, which proceeds from ill Will, but *Reproof* implies a Benevolence for him whom we tell of his Faults, and therefore is an unpleasant Employment) so ungrateful, I say, that had it not been for these Springs, Nature must have been charg'd with our Neglect of *Reproof*. But all the foremention'd Instincts of Nature are such fit Instruments of *Reproof* that the Blood of our Friend, if we neglect to reprove, must be requir'd at our own Hands, and we need not doubt but they were given us chiefly to make us execute this Irksome Task of *Friendly Reproof* more chearfully. What better use can we put them to? Doubtless the great Creator did not design them to make us Treacherous to one another, Quarrelsome about Straws, greedy to spill Human Blood, or prone to Defame and Backbite our Neighbours, but the more ready to discover our Wounds betimes, that they may be prob'd, and that we may close them for one another.

In short, since Friendship is a natural Relation, all those relative Acts and Exercises which the entire Discharge of it necessarily requires

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requires at our Hands, are Natural and Relative Duties: And farther, since Friends are the constant Objects of mutual Reprehension, and are so richly capacitated to do one another such a very good turn, such a complicated Act of Kindness, they are ungrateful Traytors to one another, if they turn their other Policies and Courtesies into Snares and Briars, by neglecting this principal Office of judicious Friendship.

Accordingly *Isocrates*, *Seneca*, *Marcus Antoninus*, *Cicero*, *Aristides*, and other *Heathen Moralists*, have given great Commendations of Reproof. *Maximus Tyrinus*, in his first or second Discourse, I remember makes Reproof the great Distinction of a Friend from a Parasite, and to recommend Reproof seems to me to be the main Drift of that excellent Sermon out of the Bible of Nature. But that the illiterate Reader may have a Taste of their Judgments in this matter, I'll pen down some very excellent Lines out of some of the most eminent Heathen Authors. And to begin with the Glory of the Romans, *Cicero*, in his *Treatise of Friendship*, has these remarkable Words; *Quanto id magis in homine sit natura, qui & se ipse diligit & alterum inquirat, cujus animum ita cum suo misceat ut efficiat pene unum ex duobus? sed plerique perverse, ne dicam impudenter, amicum habere tantum volunt quales ipsi esse non possunt; quaq;*
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ipsi non tribuunt amicis, hac ab eis desiderant. Par est autem primum ipsum esse virum bonum, tum alterum similem sui quarere. Equidem in talibus stabilitas amicitia confirmari potest: Cum homines benevolentia conjuncti primum cupiditatibus iis quibus ceteri serviunt, imperabunt; deinde equitate justitiaque gaudebunt omniaque alter pro altero suscipiet. Neque quicquam unquam nisi honestum & rectum alter ab altero postulabit: neque solum colent inter se ac diligenter, sed etiam verebuntur, nam maximum ornamentum amicitia tollit, qui ex ea tollit verecundiam. Itaque in iis perniciosus est Error, qui existimant libidinum peccatorumque omnium patere in amicitia licentiam. Virtutum amicitia adiutrix a Natura data est, non vitiorum comes, ut quoniam solitaria non posset virtus ad ea quae summa sunt pervenire, conjuncta & consociata cum altera perveniret. Hac est, inquam, societas, in qua omnia insunt quae putant homines expetenda, honestas, gloria, tranquillitas animi, atque potestas.

“What a great Privilege has Man by Nature over the rest of the Creatures, who both loves himself and seeks out a second with whose Soul he may so temper his own as to turn two Souls into one? But indeed very many are so Perverse, I forbear to say Impudent, as to expect their Friends to be such as they themselves are not, and such Kindnesses from their Friends, which they are not solicitous to retaliate.

“But

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" But in my Judgment 'tis but fit and equal
 " that ev'ry one should take care in the first
 " Place to be good himself, and then to make
 " another so. For good Persons only are
 " capable of a deep and stable Friendship.
 " When Men that are mutually united by
 " Benevolence have once got the Command
 " of those Lusts to which others are envas-
 " sal'd, then they'll take Delight in Equity
 " and Justice, and exchange good Offices
 " with one another. Neither will expect
 " any Compliance from the other which dis-
 " agrees with Uprightness and Honourable
 " Principles; neither will they only love
 " and serve, but also revere one another.
 " I say revere, for take away mutual Reve-
 " rence and Awe from Friends, and you'll rob
 " Friendship of it's greatest Ornament.
 " Wherefore they lye under a very danger-
 " ous Mistake, who think that Friendship is
 " consistent with Toleration of Lusts and
 " Vices. No, no, Friendship was given by
 " Nature to Aid, Promote and Strengthen
 " our Virtues, not to procure us Confede-
 " rates in Vice, to the intent that Social and
 " United Virtue might reach that height of
 " Perfection which solitary Virtue cann't at-
 " tain to. This, I say, is that Intimacy,
 " Partnership, Society, Friendship or what-
 " ever other Name you'll give it, which in-
 " cludes in it Honesty, Glory, Peace of
 " Mind,

“Mind, substantial Pleasure, and whatever
 “considerate Men passionately desire to
 “enjoy.”

Again he says, *Monendi amici saepe sunt & objurgandi: Et hac accipienda amice cum benevole sunt. Sed nescio quomodo verum est, Obsequium amicos, Veritas odium parit. Molestia veritas, siquidem ex ea nascitur odium quod est venenum amicitiae. Sed obsequium multo molestius quod peccatis indulgens precipitem amicum ferri sinit. Maxima autem culpa in eo est, qui & veritatem aspernatur, & in fraudem obsequio impellitur. Omni igitur hac in re habenda ratio & diligentia est primum, ut monitio acerbitate, deinde objuratio contumelia careat: Assentatio viriorum adiutrix procul amoveatur, qua non modo amico, sed ne libero quidem digna est, aliter enim cum Tyranno, aliter cum amico vivitur. Cujus autem aures veritati clausae sunt, ut ab amico verum audire nequit, hujus salus desperanda est. Scitum enim est illud Catonis, melius de quibusdam acerbos inimicos mereri, quam eos amicos qui dulces videantur: Illos verum saepe dicere, hos nunquam. Atque illud absurdum est quod ii qui monentur eam molestiam quam debent capere, non capiunt: Eam capiunt qua debent vacare. Peccasse enim se non anguntur, objurari moleste ferunt: quod contra oportebat delicto dolere, correctione gaudere.* “We
 “should often admonish and reprove our
 “Friends, and such Offices should be taken
 “kindly

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“ kindly from Friends, who deal thus with
 “ us, because they have a true Affection for
 “ us. But I know not how it comes about,
 “ but it is too true, that Truth is very offen-
 “ sive in this Case, ’Tis the Parent of a ve-
 “ ry troublesome Damp upon our Spirits :
 “ Which Readiness to take Reproof ill is
 “ that which poisons our Friendship. De-
 “ ceitful Complaisance entertains us with a
 “ momentary Delight, whereas *Reproof* cre-
 “ ates a sort of transient Hatred, but the
 “ former, how sweet soever it appears at
 “ first, proves an Engine of great Trouble
 “ at length, because through indulging a
 “ Friend in Sin, it lets him run on head-
 “ long in Ruinous Courses, without the least
 “ Stop or Controul. ’Tis the greatest Fault
 “ that a Friend can be guilty of, to slight ve-
 “ nerable Truth, and by an unlawful Ob-
 “ sequiousness be thrust into the Snares of
 “ Deceit. Wherefore in ev’ry Undertaking
 “ of this Nature we should diligently take
 “ Care that our Admonition be free from all
 “ Bitterness, and our Reproof be apply’d
 “ without any sign of Disesteem. None but
 “ Tyrants deserve Flattery : ’Tis a just Pu-
 “ nishment of the Cruel and Haughty, but
 “ to flatter a Friend is the most unseemly
 “ Ingratitude ; for a Friend need not be hu-
 “ mour’d and impos’d on as a foolish Ty-
 “ rant, with whom you cannot be free with-

“ out

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"out endangering your Life. His Condi-
 "tion is very woful and desperate who shuts
 "his Ears against the Voice of Truth, and
 "will not suffer his Friend to speak freely.
 "*Cato* very wisely observ'd, That we are
 "indebted to our very bitterest Enemies
 "more than to those who seem to be the
 "sweetest Friends, who hide our Maladies
 "and Dangers whilst they tell us the Truth,
 "and shew us our weak Side plainly. And
 "indeed nothing is more absurd than to see
 "Men when they are reprov'd, perfectly
 "mistake both the proper Object and the
 "proper Cause of Trouble and Offence:
 "For instead of their being pleas'd with their
 "being reprov'd, and troubled for those
 "Offences, which occasion'd their Reproof,
 "they take it ill that they are reprov'd, and
 "are not at all vex'd with themselves for
 "having offended, that they'd tempt one
 "to think they made it their business to
 "thwart Nature's Commands. There's a
 great deal more to this purpose in his golden
Essay about Friendship, which it would be too
 tedious to transcribe. You see here that this
 Author thought *Reproof* the Duty of a
 Friend, and gives some Directions about
 some regular Managements of Reproof, which
 we shall speak of hereafter, and I hope that
 that Circumstance in the present Citations of
 this Chapter, being but accidental, will not
 be

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be condemn'd for a Breach of Order, since my own Thoughts will be laid down by themselves concerning it. But I have one thing more to observe, *viz.* That this Author, in the Place which I last cited, makes a clear Distinction between *Monitio* and *Objurgatio*; by which he hints, That the Words were originally design'd to signifie two different Acts, *viz.* the first admonishing against, and the second chiding for a Fault. But because when we reprove for a Fault we implicitly admonish against it for the future, he has us'd the Word *Monere* in the Sense of Reproof; but had he and those *English* Writers, who use *Admonish* so, foreseen the Mischief and Confusion which it has caus'd in weak Minds, they would, I doubt not, have declin'd the freedom of using it equivocally.

But to proceed, *Antisthenes* said long since what *Cato* observ'd, which *Cicero* just now mention'd before, as *Plutarch* informs us, in his *Manual* about getting good by our Enemies, and subjoyns to the Relation a Complaint of the general Neglect of Friendly Reproof in his Time, which may be applied to our own Age: For thus he tells us, "That Men spake
"with too faint a Voice when they took the
"decent Liberty of Reproving a Friend,
"but were too nimble-tongu'd when they
"flatter'd; so that there was great need
"for

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“ for ev’ry one to be attentive to what their
 “ Enemies said to them, That since they had
 “ no Friends to dress and cure their Wounds,
 “ they might, like *Telephus*, heal them with
 “ the Spear that made them. Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡ φιλία
 “ ἰσχυρόφαντος γέμειν ἐν πᾶσι παρρησιάζεσθαι καὶ τὸ κο-
 “ λαμνιδὸν ἀντὶ τῆς λαλόντος ἀκυστὸν ἐστὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἐχθροὺς
 “ ἀλήθειαν. ὡς γὰρ ὁ Τίλιφός, &c. And *Aristides*’s
 excellent Oration about Friendship is full of
 such Observations about *Reproof*, and gives
 such excellent Directions about the Manage-
 ment of it, as the greater part of Christians
 can’t supply us with, which ’twill be fitter
 to mention in another Place. *Aristotle* tells
 us, That there can be no profitable Friend-
 ship without Reproof, ἡ δὲ τὸ χρησίμων
 ἐγκληματική, viii. ad *Nicom.* 13. The same
 Author, in the same Book, gives this as his
 Opinion, ἴσως καὶ ὁμοιότης φιλόπας, καὶ μάλιστα μὲν
 ἡ τοῦ κατ’ ἀρετὴν ὁμοιότης. μέντοι καὶ ὅντις κατ’ αὐτὴν
 καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους μέντοι καὶ ὅτε δίδονται αὐτῶν ἑδὲ ὑπε-
 ρεῖται πιαῖτα ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐπείν καὶ διακωλύουσιν; τοῦ ἀγα-
 τοῦ γὰρ κατ’ αὐτὴν ἀμαρτάνειν μήτε πῶς οἰλοῖται ὅτι πρὸς
 πᾶσι ὑπερεῖται. Οἱ δὲ μοχθηροὶ τὸ μὲν βέβαιον ἐκ
 ἔχουσιν, ὅτε γὰρ αὐτοῖς διαμένει ὁμοιοὶ ὄντες ἐπ’ ὁλίγον
 δὲ χεῖρον γίγνεται χαίροντες τῇ ἀλλήλων μοχθηρίᾳ.
 “ Where there is true Friendship there is
 “ Equality and Likeness; and that Simili-
 “ tude of Temper is the most durable and
 “ lasting which is form’d in Human Minds by
 “ Virtue. For the Virtuous only live a Life
 “ of Consistency, and are alike at all times,
 “ both

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"both with respect to themselves and one
 "another. They stand in no need of naugh-
 "ty Machinations, nor unite their Strength
 "to carry on base Purposes. On the con-
 "trary, if I may so speak, they act the Part
 "of Magistrates to one another, to fence one
 "another from the Commission of any sort
 "of Villany whatever : For 'tis natural to
 "the Good neither to sin themselves, nor to
 "suffer their Friends to commit or abet Sin:
 "But the Wicked have no Firmness nor Con-
 "stancy in their Friendship. They don't
 "continue in the same Mind or like them-
 "selves. They are seemingly Friends for a
 "Time, and for the sake of the sensual
 "Pleasure which they feel during their Con-
 "federacy in Wickedness. To mention but
 one more, *Jamblicus*, somewhere in his Life
 of the famous *Pythagoras*, tells us of that
 Philosopher, that he left it as a Maxim to
 all his Followers, *That the Renouncing any
 Friend or Friendship upon any other account but
 the Abuse or Reproof and incorrigibleness under
 it, is by no means to be approved of.* What a
 great Opinion he had of Reproof, I leave
 Men of the meanest Capacity to guess from
 hence. What has been said, I think is suffi-
 cient to prove Friendly Reproof a Natural
 Duty. I shall therefore go forward, accord-
 ing to my promise to shew that it is a reveal'd
 and a Christian Duty.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

*Proving Friendly Reproof a Reveal'd,
and especially a Christian Duty.*

CHRISTIANs, if they'l consult the Sacred Scriptures, may be presently ascertain'd that *Friendly Reproof* is a reveal'd and Christian Duty. Revelation subscribes very liberally to this useful Proposal of Nature, and has made it an inviolable Sanction by Immediate Divine Authority.

Revelation bestows great Eulogies on a Faithful Friend, and particularly on this Act of Friendship, and taxes those who either omit to give it, or abuse it, when given, with very odious Tempers of Mind: Thus Solomon: *A man that has Friends must shew himself friendly, and there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother*; And here I cannot forbear mentioning something of the Son of Sirach's, to this purpose, *A faithful friend is a strong defence, and he that has found such an one has found a Treasure. Nothing does countervail a faithful friend, and his excellency is unvaluable. A faithful friend is the medicine of life, and they that fear the Lord shall find him. Whoso fears the Lord shall direct his friendship aright, for as he is, so shall his neighbour*

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bour be also. And Solomon, He that covers a Transgression, that is to say, secretly reproves his Friend, procures love. A just man falls seven times a day (this shews ev'ry Man's want of Reproof) and rises up again by his own Endeavours and his Friend's kind Assistance. Rejoyce not when thine enemy falls, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbles. Such Carriage to our Enemies must needs endear Reproof to good Friends, for the Reproof of so generous a Person can't be suppos'd to proceed from Delight in occasions of Reproof. Wherefore Solomon, in dissuading us from such an Humour, exhorts us to Reproof, by recommending such an extraordinary fitness of Temper and Demeanour for the more fruitful and beneficial Exercise of Friendly Reproof. Again, *Open [sincere, plain]* (for he does not mean Publick) *Rebuke is better than secret love,* that is, than a conceal'd, stiff'd or uneasie Sorrow for a Friend's Miscarriages. Thus also, *A scorner hears not rebuke. Whoso hates Reproof is brutish. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an Enemy are deceitful. He that rebukes a man shall afterwards find more favour than he that flatters with his tongue.* Again, *He that being often reprov'd hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroy'd.* To cite all the other Proverbs, he has to this Purpose, is needless; since these sufficiently shew what

what a great Kindness that Prince had for Friendly Reproof.

Let the righteous smite me friendly, was the Psalmist's Request. And the Law expressly says, *Levit. 19. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: Thou shalt in any wise reprove him, and not suffer sin upon him.*

Christ and his Apostles are so far from vacating the Dictates of sound Reason, and the Commands of the Moral Law, that they design, and accordingly have quite fill'd up the Blanks of both. Love, as S. Paul tells us, *is the fulfilling of the Law.* Their Interpretations of the Tables of *Moses* have both dilated the significancy, and given a more explicit and perfect Account of the Contents of them. We have in their Writings a full and fixt, a clear and establish'd Rule of Life to walk by. The very positive Duties of our Religion, such as our *Sacraments* and other Ordinances, are not liable to the Alteration of any succeeding *OEconomy*, for the *Christian OEconomy* is the last. We have a longer List of Moral Duties, so that the Objects of Reproof are more numerous and obvious to all Capacities in the Gospel-Age. Which Circumstance makes Christians more obnoxious to the want of Reprehension, and in a Capacity to know what are the proper Subjects of Reprehension, without tedious Disputes, which opportunity those wanted who liv'd
in

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in former Times, without the Horizon of the Gospel. Moreover, the surpassing Opportunities we enjoy of clearly making a Distinction between *Error* and *Truth*, *Virtue* and *Vice*, together with the *Supremacy* of the *Dispensation* which we live under (which accomodates us with the Use of the most and richest Conduits of Grace and Assistance from above to guard our Spirits from contracting conspicuous and heinous Guilt, and to exalt them always nearer and nearer unto God) as also the *Supremacy* of the *Law-giver* (who is no less a Person than the *Son*, the express *Character* of *God*, the *Antitype* of all the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*) aggravate all our visible *Commissions* and *Omissions* to a prodigious and tow'ring height of Presumption. Farther, Those Agonies which wrung Corpuscles of Blood from *Jesus*, together with his effusion of his Life upon the Cross, to reconcile sinful Men to God, do exhibit the Turpitude of all Sin, in such a lively, piercing and astonishing manner, that the Folly, Horror and Sting of ev'ry degree of Sin is magnified exceedingly by it's being committed since his Crucifixion.

But since ev'ry Sin is more dangerous and dreadful, in the Issue, to a Christian, it must needs be confess'd that 'tis a greater Piece of Beneficence to rescue a Christian from the Clutches of a sinful Habit and an impenitent Posture

Posture of Mind, after his Commission of any single Act of Sin, because by such Endeavour we strive to deliver him from a more terrible Conflagration of Conscience and Condemnation at the last. For the greater the Light of any Transgressor is, the greater his Guilt is, and great Guilt is a constant incendiary of Condemnation. And since *Friendly Reproof* spurs Offenders on to the Exercising that Justice and wholesome Revenge upon themselves in this State for past Offences, which works in them that Repentance (which will ward off the Eternal Condemnation of the Supreme Judge) namely dread and avoidance of Sin for the future, Reprehension is to a Christian an extraordinary Exertion of Love, a very generous and beneficial Exploit. And since *Christians*, if they consider, cannot but know this, the Omission of Reproof is more Criminal in them than in a *Jew* or a *Heathen*: Especially if they consider how highly all sorts of Beneficence are encouraged, and with what prevalent Motives and vigorous Exhortations they are recommended to the Welcome Reception of all our Powers, by our Sovereign Master Christ. Beneficence is the richest Hecatomb a Christian can devote to God. We do not now as in the state of *Polytheism*, serve many Gods, Usurpers, divided and appropriate tutelar *Demons*. Such sort of

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Divine Worship inclin'd the Thoughts of the Worshippers to patronize Cruelty, Injustice, and the sordid Inclosure of their Affections. But we serve *one* God, whose Creation of all Men and unconfin'd Sovereignty over, and Providence for all Men, manifests him to be the *true* God, and the *universal Friend* of all Men: This Notion of the Unity of God, and of his being the common Father of us all (since to copy God wherein he is copyable, by our several Capacities, is the highest Perfection any Creature can be copyable of) represents to us how excellent it is to have a Catholick Love for all Men: A serious Contemplation on him naturally instils this Catholick Love into us: We are the Disciples of the *Jesus*, not of a few haughty morose and stiff Jews, but the *Jesus* of *all Nations* and *Ages*. Unity, Loving and lawful Compliance, Sollicitude for one another's Good, Universal Benevolence and Charity are the Characteristicks of Christians: We are to wish well therefore to the Bodies, Souls and Spirits of all Men: Which does not, as some may be apt to think, in the least exclude the lawfulness of cherishing a singular concern for the Members of the Family of Faith. Neither does it force us to overlook particular Love and Friendship. We may wish well to all, but we can be helpful but to a few: Our Facul-

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ties are inclos'd tho' our Affections are not. And by being very active and immediate Benefactors to some, we declare that 'tis the Faintness of our Powers, not of our Affections, which keeps us from being serviceable to every Individual of the whole rational Globe: For whilst ev'ry Individual is particularly oblig'd and benefitted by some few Individuals, all the Individuals are preserv'd: And whilst all the Integral Parts are kept in just Place and Order, the whole Body, of which they are the Constituents, stands firm and does well. Whence we may learn that eminent Acts of Charity to some particular Persons are consistent with universal Benevolence, and do really and centrally (as has been before observ'd) satisfy the Aim of a Publick and extensive Spirit: And therefore, that the Christian Religion's noble intention to infuse into the Hearts of all it's Professors a cordial Love and diffusive Good Will to all Men, does not disparage and condemn private Friendship, but rather obliges us the more ardently to love those who are not only our Lovers, because they are the Lovers of all Men, but are *emphatically* so: How can we conceive that that Institution which enjoyns us to love our Enemies as Men should forbid us to love our Friends peculiarly as Friends? 'Tis impossi-

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ble for the same Religion to encourage the foulest Ingratitude, and the most signal Generosity.

Now therefore since Christianity directs our Kindness in an extraordinary manner to some particular Persons, and requires us to do our Friends all the good that it lyes in our Power to do for them, we may be sure that since Reproof is such a great Kindness, as has been prov'd (altho' we had had no positive or particular Command to reprove) it obliges us to reprove our Friends for their Faults. Sin and the terrible Consequences of it are plainly discover'd to Christians, and therefore it must grieve Christians the more to see it in their Friends. That peculiar Gentleness, Judgment and other Graces which they are capable of obtaining by a wise and consciencious Improvement of the Means of Grace, fits them for the due Performance of Reproof. The Necessity and Usefulness of Reproof has been sufficiently demonstrated already, and may farther appear from the Scriptures, which represent *Thrones* and *Principalities*, *Powers* and *Dominions* in Spiritual High Places, incessantly conspiring against the Souls of Men. Nothing therefore can be more convenient for Men than conspiring to save one another's Souls By Reproof and other pious Acts they may

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pull one another out of the Fire: By mutual Admonition they may keep one another many times from falling into Sin, and by mutual Reproof from obstinate Persistence in it.

At length we may see how graciously God has made that our Duty which is our Interest. What we are commanded by him to do, would, if we would but take the Pains to mind the Drift of his Commands, be readily dispatch'd by us, not only from a Principle of Filial Obedience to his Heavenly Majesty, but, withal, as so many Instances of Loyalty to the genuine and commanding Beauty and Loveliness of ev'ry one of his Commands. Surely we may say with *S. John*, *His Commandments are not grievous*. This delightful Remark could not be past by without Ingratitude, whilst we are going to take notice that *Friendly Reproof*, which is of so advantagious a Nature, is one Christian Command, as the subsequent Texts witness, *If a man shall trespass*, says our ever-blessed Saviour, *go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone*. Brethren, says *S. Paul*, in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, *if a man be overtaken in a fault, do ye, who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness*. Brethren, says *S. James*, *if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converts the sinner from the error of his*

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his way shall save a Soul from death, and shall
 hide a multitude of Sins. In short, our Savi-
 our diligently obey'd his own Command :
 His Example was a Precept of Authority,
 and with the considerate might have saved
 him the Trouble of an *Oral* Command ; for
 Reproof was honour'd with a bountiful
 Largess of his precious Time, *who went about*
doing good. 'Tis true we can't reprove
 with that Authority with which he, *to whom*
all power, both in heaven and earth, was given,
 did reprove: Neither can we reprove par-
 ticular Persons of *Hypocrisie, Vainglory* and
Pride, as he did the Scribes and Pharisees.
 'Tis not for us to pretend to be intimate
 with the Hearts of Men, as he was: No Po-
 licies or external Wariness could hide them
 from him. But tho' we can't reprove as
 the *Christ of God* and the *Jesus of Men*, yet
 we may do some good by our Reproof, ac-
 cording to our poor Sphere of Knowledge
 and Authority. Finally, S. *John* prayed for
Gaius's secular Prosperity, as well became
 a *Christian* Votary, and that great Favourite
 of *Jesus*, when he wish'd, *That he might*
prosper and be in health even as his soul prosper'd.

C H A P. IV.

Giving a clear and particular Account of all those prerequisite Qualities in the Re-prover, who would re-prove his Friend with most Success and least Offence: Together with some plain Rules concerning the dexterous Application of friendly Reproof intermixt.

S E C T. I.

The Entrance into the Chapter, explaining the Term Spiritual in St. Paul, and assigning, in general, those several Branches and Degrees of Spirituality, which 'tis necessary for a Friendly Re-prover to be furnish'd with.

ONE great Hindrance of the chearful and constant Ministration of Friendly

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Reproof is, It's being so seldom Successful, and one great cause of it's frequent unsuccessfulness is the so usually giving it awkwardly.

Wherefore, to prevent this troublesome Infelicity, I think it expedient to shew what Virtues are directly requisite to set up an hopeful *Friendly Reprover*, and so by the way what Demeanour and Methods are properest to gain and recover a Friend by *Reproof*.

I now consider Friendly Reproof as a Christian Duty, and shall instruct you in the Management of it as such, and for that Reason I chuse the great *S. Paul* for my Guide, who charges Christian Brethren to reprove, in case they are *spiritual*, intimating that it signifies nothing to attempt to do any good by *Reproof*, unless the Reprover be so and so qualified, and do apply it in such and such a manner. What the Endowments and Qualifications are which equip a Man to reprove his Friend with Success and least Offence, may therefore be easily known by examining who are the *Spiritual*: Here then it will be convenient to have Recourse to the Place in the Bible where this Qualification is mention'd. Turn to the sixth Chapter to the *Galatians* and the first Verse, *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, do ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.*

Some

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Some Commentators are of Opinion, That the Spiritual, there mention'd, are the Apostolical Magistrates or Bishops, because they receive a greater Measure of the Holy Spirit than other Christians; and that this Command is solely given to them, to endeavour the Recovery of Excommunicated Persons. That Reverence which I bear to the Comprehensiveness of Christian Texts will not suffer me to reject the Sense, with some on the one hand, nor to confine these Words to it with others on the other Hand: The neighbouring Precepts are general, and given to both Clergy and Laity; and therefore I think these Words may be interpreted as a charge to them all, to strive together to do all the Service they could to the Church, by exercising all those several kinds of Christian Reproof, which their different Degrees of *Spirituality*, and their different Stations and Relations gave them Opportunity to give. *Spiritual* is a large Term, and it becomes Interpreters to give it that full Scope which the *Apostle* seems to have design'd it. The *same* Measure of the Spirit does not fit a Man to reprove as a *Magistrate*, which will qualify him sufficiently to reprove as a Man, a *Friend*, and a *common Christian*; and yet the *common Christian* may be Spiritual as well as the Christian Magistrate: 'Tis the same Spirit which is communicated to all Christi-

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ans, but then 'tis communicated in different Degrees. 'Tis not my Business to enquire what degrees of Spirituality are prerequisite to authorize a Christian to accept of Magistracy. Neither does it become those Plain and Ordinary Christians for whose use these Course Papers were writ, to be itching to know it. Fraternal amicable and *Friendly Reproof* is ev'ry Man's Duty (tho' there be some savage Wretches who live without any Friendship) and therefore 'tis ev'ry Man's Duty to know how to manage it. This is my Subject, in this I am very ready to instruct you.

Spiritual then, if we take it in no higher a Sense than a Christian endu'd with a competent Measure of the Divine Spirit to reprove his Friend, denotes a Person whose Mind is so influenc'd by the Spirit as to elicit those Fruits of the Spirit in his Life and Temper, which are mention'd just before, Chap. 5. Verses, 22, 23. *Now the fruits of the Spirit*, saith that Great Apostle, *are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance.*

These *Nine* Ornaments of a Christian contain in them all that Virtue which is necessary to make a Christian not only a *skilful* Reprover of his Friend, but also a *Successful* one, unless the reprov'd be very brutish indeed.

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Of these therefore I shall treat particularly in their Order. Indeed ev'ry one of them deserves a whole distinct Discourse; but I shall content my self with giving such a tolerable account as will suffice to shew how essential they are to a well-manag'd Christian *Reproof*, and to extract some good Rules about the handy Administration of *Reproof*.

S E C T II.

Of SPIRITUAL LOVE, *the First Qualification.*

Sincerity, or a kind Intention, is essential to the Performance of any good Office to another, and therefore essential to a *Friendly Reproof*, both as it is a Friendly Office and a Christian Duty. Now there can be no true Sincerity where there is not a precedent Plantation of Love in the Heart; and according to the Degree and Firmness of the Prepossession of this delicate Principle of Action, there our Sincerity is greater or less. Answerably also to the Value and Dignity of the Object of our Love, our Love is more or less excellent: Our Love takes its Denomination from it's Object. Spiritual Love therefore is that Love which Christ recommend-
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ed to his Followers and the Spirit of God, call'd the *Spirit* by way of Eminence, kindles in our Hearts.

This Spiritual Love may be divided into the *Love of God*, and the *Love of God's Creatures*.

I. The first Part of Spiritual Love is the *Love of God*. As Love is the first Incentive of all voluntary Action; so the Love of God is the leading Principle and Impulse of all Christian Action. Our Love of God must sit in the Throne of the Affections, because he is the Fountain of all Loveliness. 'Tis but fitting that this Love of God should be the reigning Principle of Action in rational Creatures, who are capable of knowing that God is, and that he is the perfectest Being, the Creator of all Things, and the Author of all Perfection.

This Love of God cannot be *immoderate*; for as his Creating all other Beings but his uncreated self, shews that he was once more perfect than all of them; so his continual Preservation of them and their incessant Dependence upon him, after their Creation, declares him to continue the same Perfectest Being still. *As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without End.* Our Love of him therefore ought to be constant. It should never Fade and Change. But God being incapable of receiving any
Kindness

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Kindness from us, because his immense and unparall'd Perfections raise him above the possibility of being an Object of Beneficence; the only way whereby we can express our Love is to obey his known Will. Hereby we may know that we love God, if we keep all his Commandments. He command us nothing but what he knows is convenient for us to do : Our Acts of Obedience therefore are not Acts of Merit, with respect to him, but Acts of Decency and Kindness to our selves: Which Conservation and Promotion of our Beings, by so doing, is primarily owing to his Wisdom, who first commanded us to do them. So that Humility, and a low Conception of any Performance of our own, is a necessary Ingredient of a true Love of God. Now this part of Spiritual Love is a necessary Qualification for our Christian Administration of Friendly Reproof, as 'tis a Christian Duty in General, and not at all peculiar to this or any other Particular Duty. Whenever, therefore, we think of Reproving a Friend, we ought, upon this Consideration, to remember it as a good universal Rule ; this ought to be done Principally, because God has commanded it ; for the doing or not doing any thing Principally, because God has commanded the one, and prohibited the other to be done, is the greatest Expression we can make

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to God of our Love. This way of Expressing our Love and Esteem of God is what is meant by that known Phrase, having an Eye chiefly to the Glory of God. And when we offer Inferior Motives to persuade Men to do any Duty, we do so in Condescension to the Frailty of a *common Faith*, that by demonstrating the fitness of an Action in such a Method as does not surmount the Verge of a sensual Apprehension, we may, by degrees, train up their Minds to the ready Concession of this grand *Postulatum* in *Christ's School*; *This is fitting to be done, because God, the author of all beauty, has commanded it to be done.* The Entering upon an Action with this Reason in our Hearts, as the main Ground and Spring of our setting about it, is that which consecrates Actions and makes a Reproof or any other Action a peculiar Object of God's Care: 'Tis this that secures his Blessing upon it, of which we need not fear failing, unless the Action be of such a nature as to require the Concurrence of some other voluntary Action under God (for it may happen often in many Actions, that another voluntary Agent, for whom 'tis necessary to do something towards the Completion, I speak of the Methods of God's ordinary Providence, may hinder the perfect Growth of God's favourable Concurrence with such a dedicated Action.) Thus when

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we reprove with an Eye to God's Glory, God begins to concur with this Reproof, for the sake of our good Intention, and makes it as fair for Success as, this Action consider'd as a solitary Action in the Reprover, can be: But since the Concurrence of a second voluntary Agent, namely the Reproved, is necessary, under God, and conjoyntly with the Reprover, to give this Action perfect Success by his Reformation; if the Reprov'd is perverse, God may withhold his Concurrence, and so the Action not be crown'd with Success: Nevertheless, this Action was blest with Success, as far as it was the Action of the Reprover, tho' it was not blest as it had relation to the Reprov'd: God and the Reprover have done their Parts, and 'tis not fitting that they should be charg'd with the Faults of the Reprov'd: So that whatever the Issue of a dedicated Action be, among Men, it can't be unsuccessful, if it be consider'd as begun to procure and continue us in the Favour of God; and therefore ev'ry Action, begot by a Principle of Love to God, is certainly Matter of Satisfaction and Complacency to a reflectful Mind. Which Consideration makes the Agent chearful, constant and piously resolute to carry on his Attempt, and not to be distrustful of the Goodness of it, whether Honour or Dishonour attend our doing it, whilst he lives among Men of
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so many different Tempers. His knowing the Action to be a good Action in *it's self*, because God has commanded it, and a good Action too in *himself*, the Agent, because he did it purely because God commanded it, frees him from the Trouble of making Superstitious Observations upon the Event. This is the consciencious and the happy Agent. For you hence see that he that does any good Action, because it is a *Duty in general*, has a common Principle to act by, and can't miss of attaining his main End, *viz.* the Favour of God, in respect to whose Commands he does it: Whereas, on the contrary, he who does an Action (tho' good in it self) sometimes to nourish Pride, sometimes because 'tis gainful in that Sense in which the World uses it, or because this or that Action is the darling Duty of his Constitution, so that it is but *casually* an Act of Obedience to God, but *really* an Act of Idolatry and Homage to *self*; in short, sometimes for one Reason, and sometimes for another (if the Sense of a God and his Nature and Laws be not extinguish'd in his Mind) he sets about it *anxiously*, for he may as well lose as gain his End; and if his Reproof, or any other Action, tho' good in it self, fails of Success, he has Reason, stand Cases how they will, to doubt that it was not so much because of the Default of other
voluntary

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voluntary Agents, but because God did not vouchsafe to prosper it, for the Discouragement of such sinister and pitiful Motives of Action. Be sure therefore, Christian, when you are about to endite your Friend lovingly, for any Transgression, to remember, before you use any Human Means, to look up to God, as him who has Commended the Attempt, by commanding it. Entertain an humble Sense of the inconsiderableness of your own Endeavours, and then chearfully trust the Issue with him.

II. The second Part of Christian Spiritual Love is *the Love of God's Creatures*. Now our Love of the Creatures may be *immoderate*. This is manifest: For since we ought to love God above all things, 'tis certainly unlawful to love the Creatures more than, or as much as, him. Our first Rule therefore to be observ'd in the Love of the Creatures is, That the Creatures must neither have a greater nor an equal Share with God in our Affections. But tho' we must beware not to love them immoderately, yet they may all claim some Degrees of Love from us, because they are all the Workmanship of God; and if we love the Creatures as they are the Works of God, our Love of the Creatures is an Expression of our Love of God.

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But farther, to make our Love of the Creatures just and moderate, these four Rules should be observ'd.

1. The whole Universe of Creatures is to be belov'd more than any particular Species; for the most glorious Species of all is contain'd in the Universe of Species's; and besides the whole Universe of Creatures gives more Glory to God by their harmonious Variety, and are a greater Demonstration of the Existence, Power, Wisdom and Majesty of God than any, even the most glorious single Species of Creatures.

2. All the several Species's of Creatures ought to be lov'd in different Measures, according to the different Degrees of their Resemblance of God; because one Species does not bear such signal Characters of the immense Perfections of God their Creator, as another does.

3. Ev'ry particular Species is to be belov'd more than any one single Creature of that Species; because ev'ry individual is contain'd in the Species; and ev'ry Species is the immediate Workmanship of God, whether it be a Species of Generable or Ingenerable Creatures; but we know very well that all the Individual Creatures of *Generable* Species, setting aside the two first *Proto-plasts* of each Species, are not the immediate

Works

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Works of God in such a Supreme Sense as Angels and those *Protoplasts* were.

4. Particular Creatures of the same Species, in case they are voluntary Creatures, ought to be lov'd by us, more or less, according to their different Improvements of their Nature.

They all resolve themselves naturally into this Proposition. Creatures are the Objects of Man's Love in different Degrees, according to the different Degrees of their Approach to the Nature of God. Whence, among other Consequences, we may deduce, First, That we should prefer the Good of our Neighbour's Soul before the good of his Body, because Man's Spirit is of an Angelical Nature, which is the Supreme Nature we know of under God; but his Body is of a brutal Nature, which is a Nature inferior to his own Nature, if his whole Nature be consider'd. Secondly, That we should love Man's Soul and Body, in Conjunction, more than either of them apart, for a Human Spirit or a Human Body, alone, is but an imperfect Creature. That a Human Body is so, I suppose I need not prove: But that a Human Spirit is such, perhaps, may sound somewhat harsh: But, if it does sound so, I desire you to consider, That if the Soul, when it leaves the Body, were a perfect Creature,

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Creature, there could be no Reason given, Why after this State no Man is capable of preparing himself for Heaven? of which we are as certain as that the Scriptures are the Word of God. And yet the final Sentence is at as great a Distance from Separate Souls (by Separate Souls I only mean Souls not yet rebodied) as it is from those that are yet alive; for God has appointed one Day, in which he will judge the whole World. This Truth is likewise manifested by considering, That all Souls, immediately before their final Condemnation or Justification, shall be rebodied by the Omnipotence of God; and then, and not till then, be either perfectly Miserable or perfectly Happy (happy or miserable they will be (tho' separated) but not perfectly so.) Thirdly, We hence learn that ev'ry Man ought to have some Men the peculiar Objects of his Love and Care: For Men are the chief Objects of Man's Assistance. Angels indeed are more lovely than Men; but then they're above the want of Man's Help. Now the Soul, were it to benefit the Human Universe, is to benefit some few particularly, as has been before shewn. Fourthly, Every Man should chuse for the peculiar Objects of his Love, the best Men, or at least those of the best Inclinations, with whom he can get acquainted; for good Men, who labour to polish and perfect their

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their Nature, love God more than bad Men, who deface their Make; for good Men strive to be more like God, and a Desire of being assimilated and united to any Object, shews an entire and firm Complacency in that Object: But Wicked Men so impair their Frame, that they ev'ry Day go farther and farther from God's Presence, and are nearer and nearer to that horrible Condition, of being disowned by God. When I say, They flee from God's Presence, I do not speak with respect to God's Omnipresence, for the right Hand of his Power holds them fast, wherever they are, but my Meaning is, That God is less visible to them here, where neither Mercy nor Justice have their perfect Work, and will be eternally invisible to them in that Glorious Attribute, his Mercy, in the other World.

Now, first, we may learn that this Spiritual Love of the Creatures is a necessary Qualification for the Performance of Friendly Reproof, if we consider the particular Nature of this Duty, either with respect to the Reprover, or with respect to Reproof it self, and the Subjects of Friendly Reproof; or with Respect to the Reprov'd, who is the Object of Reproof. For first, As for the Reprover, it makes a Man do this Duty with chearfulness: For his greater Love for Souls than Bodies convinces him that his
Friend's

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Friend's Peace of Conscience, which is the Reward of a sober Life, does bear some Glimpse of the Satisfaction of God himself, is a more solid, perfect and durable Pleasure than the transient and momentary Pleasures of Sin, which Conviction makes his Reproving his Friend not only a good Act, as it is good in it self; but a good Act in the *Agent*, and consequently makes it a more rational and self-satisfying Act of Charity in him, which will make him administer it chearfully and constantly; and by his chearfully doing his Duty he procures the Pleasure of God, for God loveth a chearful Giver. A Man that loves the Creatures spiritually, knows that by his Reproof, which is a sign of a transient and wholsome Displeasure, he endeavours to prevent his Friend's Pertinacy in Sin, which will degrade his Friend's Being, and force him, out of Love to God, to be eternally displeas'd with his Friend: For Devils and damn'd Ghosts are their own Creatures: They are Eternal Enemies to God, and therefore are no longer reputed the Creatures of God, or to be look'd on by God as such; and therefore 'tis impossible to love God eternally, without hating them with a perfect and unalterable Hatred. Consequently, when our Friend is once enclos'd in that horrible Order, by his Impenitence in this State, we must either part with our
Friend

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Friend or our God for ever; but our *Reproof* may make him exercise that Repentance, to which (notwithstanding some loving Feuds and Uneasinesses during the Intervals of giving and receiving *Reproof*) we shall owe the Eternal and uninterrupted Enjoyment of both him and God too, where he will be as much above the want of *Reproof*, in his Capacity, as the bright Seraphim or Cherubims themselves. Secondly, Spiritual Love is a necessary Qualification for a Friendly Reprover, if we consider the Nature of *Reproof* it self, to make it Perfect and Impartial; for this Principle will not suffer him to pass by any visible Faults, as many do, who reprove for some Sins, but do not reprove for others. The Spiritual Love of the Creature does make a Friend not only reprove his Friend for Drunkenness, Uncleaness, Prophaneness and such gross Sins, but also for those Extravagancies of the Tongue, and other Faults which the World counts small Sins, and not needful to be reprov'd, because they are not so destructive of Temporal Credit and bodily Health, or lay the Committers of them open to the Lash of the Law. Men of carnal Minds will reprove one another for Vices of the first Nature, and that too with a sincere Affection; but then this Affection is but Brutal, Partial and Injudicious: 'Tis an Affection only for one
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another's Bodies and Secular Interests, and does not come up to the noble Pitch of true Spiritual Love. Should one of those carnal Well-wishers see his Confederate, for the Term Friend is too excellent to be us'd of them, commit some private Act of Injustice or any other Sin which does not strike the Eye of the World, and so undermine their Secular Credit or Welfare, he would rather approve of, than reprove his Chrony for so doing: For as for the Welfare of the Soul, he is not at all solicitous about that; and when he reproveth him for palpable and open Vices, that threaten his Health and Temporal Reputation, he only does it out of Self-Love, because constant Companions being always judg'd to be alike, one Friend's Reputation suffers with the Reputation of another; or at least he considers that a Friend of an ill Name will have the less Ability to serve him, because his Interest is thereby weakned in the World. But one who reproveth by the Impulse of the Divine Principle of Spiritual Love, having a View of the Soul and the Body together, as they constitute one Man, will reprove a Friend with Regard to his whole Manhood, and therefore will reprove him not only for those Sins which maim his Secular Welfare, but for all visible Sins whatsoever, whether Commissions or Omissions, and that because he knows they

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they are Sins, and therefore, without doubt pernicious to the Soul here, and which, if unrepented of, will treasure up Anguish to both Soul and Body in the other World: For he knows that no Actions can be so private but God sees them, tho' the Eyes of the World are regardless of them, and that all Sin being contrary to the Nature of God, God must needs hate Sin, and will punish it hereafter if it be unrepented of. He wisely considers, that let a sinful World pass as favourable a Sentence as they please on Men of loose Lives, whose Interests do not stand in Competition with theirs, nor hinder their Temporal Quiet, that his Friend must, however one Day answer for it before the final Tribunal, as well as Cut-throats and Robbers must for their Publick Injuries which molest others. If they are Sins, be they against which of the Tables they will, the Devil is very well pleas'd; for he knows that if they are unrepented of, he can take an occasion from them to blast the Reputation of the Agent before God and Angels, whose Esteem ought most to be priz'd. So that we see how necessary a Qualification for a Friendly Re-prover a Spiritual Love of the Creatures is: For it has a Regard to both the present and the future State, and if our Welfare and Prosperity in the present stands in Competition with our Prosperity in the future, it submits

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our present Welfare to our future, because the future is Eternal and the present may be but a Moment, at least 'tis but a Moment, if compar'd with the future. So also if the Pleasure of the Body stands in Competition with that of the Spirit, and consequentially with that of the whole Man, if we have a Regard to Futurity, it submits that to this, the lesser to the greater. Whence 'tis manifest that Spiritual Love is the perfectest Love with which we can love our Friend, because it comprehends the whole Duration of our Friend's Existence, and all his Human Capacities. Thirdly, We may farther learn from the third Corollary (which was drawn from those Rules which we laid down as necessary to be observ'd, to regulate our Love of the Creatures and to make it spiritual) that a peculiar Love for the Person whom we reprove, is essential to a Friendly Reproof, and so the Spiritual Love of the Creatures is a necessary Qualification in a Friendly Reprover, with respect to the Reprov'd, because it regulates the Choice of the particular Object of our Reproof, for (tho it comprehends all Subjects of Reproof) yet it regulates the Reprover a different way, with respect to the Object, for tho' all Offenders, whether more or less, are the Objects of Reproof, yet ev'ry Offender is not an Object of Friendly Reproof in ev'ry Man's Eyes.

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To make a Friendly Reproof agreeable with a Spiritual Love of the Creatures, 'tis requisite that he whom we reprove be our Friend. One of the Rules of a Christian's Love of the Creatures is, To love his Fellow Creatures above all other Creatures under Heaven: Now if he wishes well to them all, he must, as has been shewn, love some more peculiarly than others. Should ev'ry Man attempt to reprove, or in any other respect relieve ev'ry Man, there would, through the impossibility of performing it, be nothing but attempting to do good without bringing any attempt to Completion, and so there would be no perfect good done. Wherefore the good Christian endeavours to exert his Love, according to that degree of Strength that God has given him: He can very cheerfully praise God, for having made him a Man, and therefore will be far from aspiring to be above the Capacity of an Angel: He considers that it is God's sole and inviolable Prerogative to *shew Mercy over all his Works*, and therefore humbly shews his unfeign'd and discreet Love to all, by being a peculiar, constant and extraordinary Benefactor to some. *God and Nature* have taught us, by the Deficiency of our Strength, that private Friendships are the strongest Pillars of Universal Love. He that climbs to take hold of the Godhead, will fail of discharging

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the Duty of Humanity. A wise Christian will not, under Pretence to that Spiritual Love, the Nature of which many, who pretend to it, do not so much as understand, act pragmatically. If he is call'd to be a Temporal Magistrate, he will reprove as a Temporal Magistrate: If he is call'd to be a Bishop, he will reprove as a Bishop: If he has Children or Servants, he will reprove as a Parent or Master: If he has Pupils or Dependents he will reprove as a Tutor or a Patron: And if there is extraordinary Occasion of Casual Reproof, he will chearfully obey the sudden Call of the Divine Providence, and stand up for the Honour of Religion. Otherwise he will meddle with no Body's Faults except his own and his dear Friend's, who sticks closer to him than Brother to Brother. Nevertheless, if he sees a Stranger offend, and knows one who is intimately acquainted with the said Offender, he will mind that Man's Friend of his Trust. But not to digress; Friends are equal, they know how to insinuate into one another, as far as is consistent with Duty, and to please one another's Humors, when there is occasion to speak of a Fault. They know what particular Arts of Address and charitable Policy are most likely to work best upon one another: They can urge, That they are oblig'd in Fidelity Gratitude and Love to reprove. Besides

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the Remembrance of a Friend's Favours and Helpfulness ingratiates his Requests, sweetens his Reproof, and makes the Physick less loathsome: His Universal Assistance suggests that the Reproof is given out of a loving Heart, as far as Love is discoverable: But any Act, if it be construed an Act of Love, how tart soever it be at the first to the Taste, is pleasant and grateful in the Digestion. Once more, a Friend may reprove constantly: He can reprove with *Freedom* and *Parrhesie*; he need not do't *obliquely* and *cowardly*. All these Circumstances plainly shew how necessary 'tis for us to take care that we reprove none but our Friends for our Faults. Indeed a Friend's Reproof is not always welcome: There are a great many Motives that go to the making it so, and therefore a Stranger's Reproof can look but for cold Entertainment. This I thought fit to insist on, because most of those few who can be got to consider, that Reproof is a Christian Duty, find it so hard to be induc'd to remember not to stand tampering with the Sores of Strangers: So very much has Friendly Reproof suffer'd by those unseasonable Expressions of good Will, which indiscreet Reprovers have made. We need not question but ev'ry Man hath some Person whom he calls his Friend, and if they who pretend to be his Friends, do not shew themselves friendly in this Re-

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spect, let them see to it, what is that to us? No Man can be ev'ry Man's Friend without Fickleness and Inconstancy: And, considering the deprav'd Tempers of the generality, Reproof is not a fit Act to begin with, in order to recommend us to any one's particular Esteem and Friendship: So that it is properest, unless you meet with an extraordinary wise Professor of Christianity, to give a Signet of your peculiar Kindness in all other Instances first, and perhaps Reproof may be grateful in the rear; for if we would cure the infirm, we must handle them as infirm. In short, when any one is your Friend, you may reprove him as your Friend: If he is not your Friend, 'tis his Friend's Business, not yours, to reprove him for his lesser Faults. Give others fair Liberty to chuse their Surgeon, since they have as much Right to a free Choice as we can have; and if they make an ill Choice, and will not chuse new ones, after they have made such a Choice, they are rational Creatures as well as we, and have Ministers to direct them, and their Blood will not be required at our Hands. Nature will seldom let any but a Friend's Reproof operate kindly: No Man can do all Men good: Let us therefore do good thoroughly to those few with whom we have handsome Opportunities of striking a wise Friendship, and then we need not question but that the great

great Inspector of the generous Desires of our Hearts, and the shortness of our Abilities will not condemn us for not doing more than we were able to do, and not assaying rash, extempore and effoet Charities, but will pronounce us before Angels and Men in the great Day of Accounts, faithful Stewards of all our Faculties, to God, and God's stately Universe of Creatures.

S E C T. III.

Of SPIRITUAL JOY, a second Qualification for a Friendly Reprover.

THE great Alienation of Human Nature from the Divine, by the Fall of *Adam*, has engendred such dismal and dark Apprehensions of Virtue in our Minds, that we are apt to suspect that a Hook lies under ev'ry Reproof, and that those who endeavour to separate us from our Sins have a Design to abandon us to a State of Melancholy.

Wherefore, to stab this groundless Suspicion in the Hearts of any whom we would reprove, *Spiritual JOY* is a necessary Accoutrement for a friendly Reprover: He must beware of giving way to any Symptoms of Churlishness and Melancholy, such as clouded

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clouded Looks and waspish Answers, and endeavour to breath an Air of innocent Alacrity in the whole Tenor of his Conversation. By Joy I don't mean foolish and profuse Laughter ; no, I am speaking of Spiritual Joy, a Joy that is the Author of sober and serene Smiles, Smiles that agree with a thankful Recital of Psalms and Hallelujahs in God's Temple : This represents the intensest Acts of Devotion as Acts of Pleasure : This is a Pleasure which the Carnal are not capable of, and yet those who enjoy Spiritual Pleasures enjoy the prime of all carnal Pleasures, for indeed none but a Moderate Use of Carnal Pleasures can properly be said to be Enjoyment. He that moderately uses them, has the Prime and Youth of sensual Pleasures, without that Languor, Deadness, and those Diseases which the immoderately Sensual find in the extreme and decrepit Use of them : In short, Smiles, which are the Presents of a sedate and gratified Conscience. 'Tis Conscience that must be pleas'd : For Conscience only can procure this Joy of God's Spirit for us. This Spiritual Joy then is to be got by constant, circumspect Walking : For Conscience has an Eye always bent upon us, and therefore we must be always very cautious of doing any thing which will grate upon Conscience. Innocence, delightful Reflections and Obedience to the Divine Precepts

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cepts is the richest Sacrifice we can offer to Conscience. True Universal Repentance is the only Holocaust with which we can appease this great Personage, which sits Representative of the Majesty of Heaven in ev'ry Human Breast.

This Reverence of Conscience is a great Preservative against Envy, to which the other Sense of Spiritual Joy is opposite, *viz.* Fraternal or Friendly Gratulation. Gratulation is a Duty, which through the Prevalence of Flattery, being confounded with it, is very much despis'd and rejected in this Age. What Gratulation is, and what an excellent Office of Friendship it is, will take up too much Room in this Treatise to shew it at large, for it can't be done without discussing the great Ends the Creator had in imprinting on our Natures the Faculty of Admiration, an Appetite after Glory; wherein the true Use and Abuse of it consists; how Gratulation differs from Flattery, and how we may distinguish these two Acts in another. Farther, this can't be done without shewing wherein Pride consists, and what is not Pride, which seems very like it; as also without explaining the Nature of Vain-glory, and what is not Vain glory, which seems at first Sight to unthoughtful Men to be so. The generality have very ill Notions of these Matters, and therefore to

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instruct them fully about the due giving and receiving Gratulation, I am convinc'd (tho' against my Will) there will be need of a distinct Treatise. However, I shall speak two or three Words of it, as far as it has Connection, I think, with the Duty of Reproof. To return then, whoever leads such a Spiritual Life as to rejoyce in the Lord, will be so far from grudging and fretting, that he will exult, triumph and roar like the adoring Waves in Heaven, through Joy of Heart, when he sees God and his lovely Features delineated in another virtuous Person: He will rejoyce, according to the excellent Counsel of *S. Paul*, with them who spiritually rejoyce. Do you therefore, who would reprove acceptably, learn hence to be ev'ry now and then congratulating your Friend's Virtues. Seize on all Opportunities of acquainting your Friend how the pleasant Remembrance of such and such a good Action in him, cheers and transports your Spirits, and confirms and heightens your Satisfaction, in having made Choice of him for your Friend. Frequently tell him, That you think Heaven expects no small Improvement in Piety from you, upon the account of your Intimacy with such a brave Example of Virtue as he is. This is the way to convince him that whenever you chide him you are not egg'd on by a Spirit of Envy, Detraction, Uncharitableness, or
an

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an Humour that feasts on other Men's Faults, to censure him, but that you were constrain'd by a great Love to his Soul, and a Principle of Fidelity to your Pretences to reprove him. He that praises always is treacherous; and he that is always complaining can't but be very Burthensome. By owning freely and frequently his Instances of a Virtuous Conduct, and hanging much upon these fragrant Flowers, your Reproofs will not tempt him to be drowsy and despair: And by telling him oft of his Miscarriages, your just and prudent Commendations will not puff him up. Your Praises will prove your Reproofs no Reproaches, and your Reproofs will vindicate your Praises from being calumniated for Flatteries. The tempering Gratulations for good Actions, with Reproof for bad ones, shews a true Friendship, as *Agapete*, that *pious Deacon*, has very well observ'd. He only mentions Speech, but what he says may very well be apply'd to Actions. "Look upon those, says that excellent Author, "to be your truest
 "Friends, who diligently weigh your Dis-
 "courses in a just Ballance, and express a
 "Fellow-complacency with you in the best
 "of them; but are troubled and frown
 "when you speak otherwise; for these pro-
 "duce a sure Token of their unfeigned
 "Freindship. Ἡ δὲ τέτυκται φίλος ἀληθινός

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μη τὸς ἐπαινεύοντας ἀπογνῶναι τὰ ὧσα σὺ λέγουσιν· ἀλλὰ
τὸς κείσθαι διὰ τὰ πάντα πρὸς ἡμῶν ὁποῦται καὶ συν-
δεδμένους μὲν ὅτι τῶν χρηστέων· ὁπότε γὰρ ζήτωντες δὲ ὅτι
τοῖς ἐναντίοις· ἔτοι γὰρ ὄντως ἀψευδὲς αὐτοῦ φιλίας δεικ-
νύσθαι περὶ μὲν.

Farther, your intermixing
Gratulations with Reproofs, shews that you
are not guilty of too forward a Suspicion.
Thus Cicero, in the forecited Essay upon
Friendship, when he had just given a Charge
to Friends to beware of Dissimulation, re-
commends a sweetness and pleasantness of
Behaviour to our Friends; For, says he,
there can be no Friendship but amongst good Men;
for a good Man will observe these two Rules in
Friendship; First, not to dissemble or cloak any
thing which offends him; for a fair and sincere
Person, who is of a generous and ingenuous Tem-
per, will rather chuse to be an open Enemy than a
deceitful discontented Friend, and such an one
who will not speak his Mind freely in case of
Transgression: So also, secondly, he will defend
his Friend's Reputation against the Accusations of
others, and scorn to be always suspecting that his
Friend has violated some Law of Reason. Cour-
tesie and Pleasantness in Speech and Demeanour
is that which seasons Friendship and gives it a
grateful Savour. In compliance then with
the Judgments of wise Men, do you, when
you reprove your Friend for a Fault, men-
tion one of your Friend's principal Virtues,
and ask him calmly how incongruous that
Di-

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Divine Grace, and the Sin for which you reprove him are. Ah! say with Fraternal concern, "Is it not a thousand Pities your Life is not all of a Piece, and that you have not a whole set of Graces answerable to that? And that he may believe that your so greedily praising whatever you see laudable in him, does not proceed from Partiality from him, or is merely us'd as an Engine and for Stratagem's sake, endeavour to bring your self to a Habit of inflaming his and your own Emulation, by refining on the Excellencies of all the Heroick Examples which you either know in Person, have heard or read of. *Talk not of other Men's Lives*, are the admired Words of an admirable Writer; if by *Lives*, as the Context informs us, be understood their *Faults*, *Misfortunes* and *Private Concerns*. But were it possible for an Author of that excellent Spirit to have counsel'd us to have declin'd Speaking of the Virtues of others, according to the false Glosses of Modern Conversation, they would have been the fittest Motto to be inscrib'd on the Gates of Hell that any Division of that City of Horror and Confusion could have invented. The Desperate have made themselves incapable of Virtue, and therefore the Thoughts of Virtue are dire and odious to them. Virtue indeed is a beautiful and pleasant Object in it self. Nothing less than an

Hea-

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Heaven, a God, an all-wise and powerful, a supreme and infinitely gracious Being to be eternally possess'd, is the Purchase of it: This they know, and, O wretch'd Creatures! They know withal, That there is an unpassable Gulph fix'd between it and them: Thus they do believe and tremble. So that a mere Notional Faith is very consistent with a State of Eternal Distance from God: As Unbodied Spirits, they clearly see wherein true Happiness consists, and the means that lead to it. 'Tis this joya'd with a Sense of Unattainableness of it to them, that turns ev'ry Exertion of Joy unto good Spirits into a Thunderbolt against themselves: 'Tis for this Reason that ev'ry Virtue in Man whets their Rage, when they sincerely consider, That had they follow'd after a firm Virtue when they were here, as well as those Christians whose Prosperity they envy and continually undermine, that dreadful Condition need not have been their Portion. But with the Inhabitants of the Earth, blessed be God, it is not so bad: Nevertheless, 'tis too reasonable to conclude from what has been said, That their Souls are very near those black Clims, who feel all manner of Vice, but especially Envy and Uncharitableness, so imperious in their Breasts that they cannot bear with the mention of a good Example, or those Graces of God in those who are the brightest Lights

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Lights of a dark Age: They will grant that a Man may be Proud, Self-conceited, Phari-
faical, Vainglorious, and make a shew of Pi-
ety before Men; they know so much by
themselves, their Experience tells them this
is practicable; they have acted a Part before
now as well as the demurest of their Neigh-
bours, and can, upon occasion, do it again,
in the presence of a pious Prince, Benefa-
ctor or the like. But as for such or such an
one's being Devout from a Sense of an omni-
present Being, and an inward Complacency
through a state of sincere Righteousness,
constant Peace and ineffable Joy in the Holy
Ghost, they question that very much: You
may easily apply this to other Virtues, and
the false Names with which they take care
to sully and obscure them; but ev'ry Failing,
especially in one who seems to have a little
more Zeal than the inconsiderate Herd, is
rich and just Matter of Censure and Invective.
Here Tautology and Exaggeration is pardon-
able, and you may prate and parrot with a
Grace: Comparisons themselves are not odi-
ous, because by this means the Drone and
the Sot is as good as his Neighbours, tho' he
does not make so much Appearance: But to
buffet his Ears with a tedious and impertinent
Harangue about this Man's Temperance,
another's Industry, lashes his Idleness and
Debaucheries, and it seems in this Age is for-
mal

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mal and unmannerly ; the Sight of a good Example gauls him sufficiently, and therefore to dwell upon such Topicks in Company will disturb Conscience too much for the Sinner to enjoy his deceitful Mirth. The good Man's Virtue, naturally of it self, upbraids the Sinner with his Transgressions, he reproves his Thoughts : He is grievous to him to behold, for his Life is not like other Men's, his Ways are of another Fashion ; and hence it is that tho' the Wicked Man confronts the Sun in his scandalous Courses, and the whole Town is made privy to his Debaucheries, yet when his Infamy is ripe, and he sees himself become the Nuisance and Contempt of those that are round about him, the virtuous Neighbour notwithstanding his constant, courteous and peaceable Demeanor, is suspected, nay, 'tis well if not positively arraign'd with an Oath, to be the sly Informer and a vile pragmatistical Person : And to render him such, if he speaks the last of the Company, tho' never so innocently of another Person's Fault which first provok'd to it, or modestly addresses to them not to be so severe on the absent, they will squeeze an Offence out of his Words : They have an hundred Gins in their Ears laid for him, and do not question but they shall catch some slight occasion or other, for a monstrous Report. Wherefore, virtuous Reader, 'twill be our safest way

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way to leave them ; and since they resist the Endeavours of their Friends for their Conversion, let us by no means forget them in our Closets. I am now speaking to Men of Candor, who delight in praising famous Men, and are as eager to admire their Splendours as they are to declaim against their Defects. You know this is the way to imitate them, and advance daily in Virtue ; to excel yourselves as much as you do your Neighbours already, and yet still to be humbler ev'ry Day than other : Viewing and conferring about excellent Examples curbs a good Christians extravagant Thoughts of himself, and yet makes him a fitter Object of self-esteem ; hereby he has always very sensible Exhortations to Virtue ; for Examples not only exhibit Virtue as lovely, but to be possible and attainable ; nay, it will not suffer him to be contented with an ordinary Measure of it, and to be at a stand, but always gasping after nearer Approaches to a perfect Human Representation of his Creator. Speaking of them to generous Souls is an inoffensive and effectual Reproof of not only opposite Practices, but ev'ry degree of Sluggish Lukewarmness, and other Infirmities which are so little taken notice of but by self-consciousness, that we have no express Names for them to reprove them directly : And, I believe, this indirect Reproof, by
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the Rules of Prudence, should always be tryed first; that the reprov'd Person may have an occasion of hereby knowing how far Generosity has got Ground in his Heart. This will demonstrate that you delight in Virtue, and that you reprove Sin from a hearty hatred of Sin. Throw a Rose therefore on ev'ry worthy Man's Coffin: His Merits claim Respect to his Monument: They may exact some Tribute towards the perfuming his Name, and the embalming his Memory from ev'ry pious Mouth.

In short, if we would accomplish generous Purposes by mourning with them that mourn, 'tis expedient to rejoyce in due Season with them who rejoyce. The first is a powerful Antidote against Vice, the latter a brisk Spur to Virtue.

S E C T. IV.

Of SPIRITUAL PEACE, *the third Qualification of a Friendly Re-prover.*

Spiritual *PEACE* is a necessary Qualification, whether we take it, first, for the particular Virtue of Peaceableness. Or, secondly, for a Satisfaction which arises from a general Testimony of the Reprover's industrious

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strious Endeavour to lead an universally righteous Life. Or, thirdly, If we take Peace for a particular Satisfaction from the Reprover's consciousness of his own good Intention, and of the just Grounds of his *Reproof*. And, first, 'tis necessary that the Reprover be noted for the Virtue of Peaceableness; for he that is given to Censoriousness and unreasonable Suspicions, to be Quarrellsome and Upbraiding on ev'ry occasion, exposes his Reproof to Misconstruction, and gives Birth to a Jealousie in the Reprov'd, that he reproves with a fierce Appetite, and gluts a malicious and envious Temper in so doing. As therefore you prize the thriving of your just and friendly Reproofs, beware of running into false and counterfeit Reproof. Take heed of confounding *Admonition* and *Reproof*. Remember that God alone is the Judge of Hearts. Beware of arraigning any one for Hypocrisie, like *Job's* indiscreet Reprovers, for that's enough to provoke the Patient himself, and will betray them at least into some indecent Justifications; for the Imputation of Hypocrisie is always very offensive, because 'tis not for one Man to arraign another of Hypocrisie; and therefore to such presumptuous Reprovers, *Job's* Words may be reply'd, *How forcible are right Words, but what does your Arguing Reprove?* ch. 6. v. 25.
Their

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Their uncouth Reproofs seem'd to be the greatest Affliction of all to him; and indeed 'tis a common Fault for People to be censuring others very deeply and severely, when they are in Calamity through their adulterate and confin'd Notions of the Methods of Divine Providence. If they're Persons more Circumspect than others, as to their external Carriage, then, if they can observe some Specks or Failings in them, they are apt to think that all their Devotion and Wariness of Behaviour was nothing but Hypocrisie, and a Net to get Love and Repute amongst Men; but these should remember, that notwithstanding some particular Offences, they might be sincere as to the main, and that Afflictions are sent rather as Signs of Favour than Tokens of Favour by our Heavenly Father. In short, not only beware of the more open Violations of Peace, but don't so much as vouchsafe your Ear to a back-biting and slanderous Tongue. Strive to Reconcile many Differences, and to repair broken Credits, and live as peaceably with all Men as 'tis possible for you to do in this Abusive and Opprobrious World; as far as is consistent with your Affection for your Religion, and that *Peace of God* and Conscience *which passes all Understanding*, and which the Violence of no *Rabshakeh* can take from you. Follow Peace, I say, with all
Men,

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Men, with this Limitation : For the peaceable Man's Reproofs must be taken in good Part, if any one's are.

But secondly, *Peace* is a necessary Qualification, if by Peace be meant that Satisfaction which arises from a general Testimony within the Reprover, that it is his hearty Endeavour to live *Godlily, Righteously and Soberly*, notwithstanding very numerous Imperfections in him may be seen by his Friends in this Mortal State. This Satisfaction is in a great degree the Largess of the Spirit of God ; and indeed this Testimony is necessary to make a Friend vigorous and earnest in giving Reproof, to inspire a proper Countenance, and to make it awful, that his Reprehension may be the keener, and touch the reprehended Person to the Quick. The Sense of that inexpressible Comfort with which an inward Testimony of a Tenor of Christian Sincerity refreshes the Reprehender's Mind, will not let him, in all Love, dismiss his Friend, before he has so far wrought his Brother, whom he would have be as happy as himself, up into such a reflectful Posture of Soul, as to give Audience to the Majestick Voice of Conscience, against the Sin for which he reproves him : Which is such a terrible Prediction of the intolerable Anguish of a wounded Spirit, and an eternally irreconcilable Conscience, that it can't but convince

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vince the offending Brother that *there is no Peace to the Wicked*, while they continue impenitently such; and that true, solid and permanent Peace is only the Harvest of Christian Integrity. I would not have any one think that I am of Opinion, That no Man can reprove to the purpose but he who is conscious of unsinning Obedience. No, alas! for after that rate no Man could be capable of being a Benefactor by Reproof, for *in many things we offend all*, even the best of us. Heavenly Perfection is as inconsistent with the Life of Man, in this frail State, as Imperfection is with the Converse of blessed Spirits above. Whilst the Devil slides along the Earth he will be flinging some Dust into the Eyes of the vigilantest Christian. Neither Imperfections nor Sins, if the Offender shew his sincere Repentance by a Tenor of good Life, render a Man unfit to reprove his Friend. On the contrary, this common Sense of the lability of Mankind, proves the Necessity of Mutual Reproof among Friends, and is a fit Motive for every Friend to reprove his Friend, that when he offends, himself he may merit his Neighbour's Reproof, and the Benefit of such wholsom Awe upon his Soul. But however it ought to be consider'd, that there is a great Distance between Blemishes and transient Apostasies, which shew the best Christian here to be a
Man

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Man and a Mortal, and that wretched Carelessness and habitual Irregularity of Life, which proclaims many who have been baptiz'd, and do throng our Churches, to be mere, and consequently hypocritical, Professors of the Christian Religion. We generally charge those who live strictest, tho' they sin the least, with Hypocrisie, for sinning at all; and it must be confess'd that ev'ry Sin is more or less an Act of Hypocrisie, or at least appears such to the Eyes of the World, from which Hearts are lock'd up: But then, certainly those lewd and vicious Livers, whose whole Lives are, as it were, but one continu'd Chain of Sin, have the most reason to count themselves Hypocrites, since by sinning most they give others the strongest Temptations to brand them for Hypocrites; so that the prophane Person who tramples upon the Promise he made at Baptism, in the Highways and Turnings of the Streets, till he renounces his Baptismal Vow, must be confess'd to be the most monstrous Hypocrite, tho' he is the most ready to call others so, who (tho' they really may be so inwardly) ought to be clearest of the Imputation, in our Judgments, because the seldomness of their Offences gives us less occasion to mistrust that they are such. They that offend seldom, do not like notorious Sinners, come with prodigious Beams
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in their own Eyes, to spy and pluck out the Motes of others. Alas! who will ever (tho' upon other Motives he may) desist from a Sin which is of an inferior Nature to ev'ry one of that vast multitude of Sins which are inveterate in such a Reprehender, for the sake of his Reproof? The Serenity and Consistency of a vigilant Person's Manners (tho' they be not perfect and unblameable in the Sight of the spotless omniscient Being, and when they're compar'd with the exact Pre-scripts of the Divine Law, yet since they are perfect, consider'd as the Manners of a Human Creature, in the state of Trial and Probation, where many Spiritual Enemies and Temptations are to be encountred with) will make way and raise Veneration for his Reproof. But that extraordinary Shame and vexatious Contradiction of Conscience and Countenance, which tormentingly haunts profligate Livers, will not permit them (supposing they should have so much Sense as to pity Sin in their Friends, because they have the Opportunity of seeing the Ugliness and Turpitude of Sin with more Advantage in others than in themselves) I say, supposing this, unless they have got such a Mastery over Shame, as to be thoroughly prepar'd Candidates of Devilship, it will not suffer them to reprove with that Freedom, Courage and Authority, which is the Grace
of

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of *Reproof*. A good Man's Infirmities may allow him some time to do others good; but scandalous Livers are too wretchedly in the Mire, and labour under too heavy a Load of Sin themselves, to have Heart, Time or Strength enough to relieve others. Whence you see how an erroneous Life deprives us of the possibility of doing any good this Way. 'Tis impossible for those who are remiss in other Duties, to discharge this. Such a close Friendship of Society do all the Duties of our lovely Religion hold together: So necessary is universal Righteousness. He that does one Duty and neglects others, in vain Hopes to do any Duty perfectly, and so as to have it constru'd Duty by God Almighty. I therefore advise such not to unhallow this excellent Branch of Charity with their impious Mouths, till they have cleans'd themselves from their *Aethiopian* Filthiness, till they are as pure in the Eyes of the candid as they would seem to be in their own Eyes, tho' their Consciences testify against them at the same time, when they defecate, ridicule and backbite this admirable Duty of *Reproof*, under a Pretence of Reproving by their uncouth Exprobrations.

Moreover, thirdly, *Peace* is a necessary Qualification in a *Friendly Reprover*, if we understand by Peace a particular Satisfaction proceeding from a Consciousness of a good

H Intention,

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Intention, peculiarly when we reprove : For 'tis a particular kind Intention for the Person whom we reprove, which peculiarizes this *Reproof* ; for unless you reprove as a Friend, your *Reproof* is not friendly, tho' he whom you reprove has approv'd himself a Friend to you : For, as we have shewn in the *second Section concerning the Spiritual Love of the Creatures*, that in order to constitute a *Reproof* friendly in his Eyes, whom you reprove, 'tis necessary, that you should first have receiv'd some visible Token of Friendship from him ; and moreover that you should have also given him some visible Signet of your Friendship ; so also 'tis necessary to constitute your *Reproof* friendly in the Sight of God, that you be incited to reprove him by a peculiar Love for him, which is visible only to God.

Lastly, To have that entire Peace which is requisite to make you a thorough Friendly Reprover, you must not fail to have a firm Assurance that you reprove him for a just Cause and upon just Grounds, such as your seeing him commit a Fault, and that it is really a Fault which you reprove, a commission or omission of something that is forbid or enjoyn'd either *explicitly* or *implicitly* in the Holy Scriptures. Adhering to this Rule is the Top-Branch of Christian Prudence in administering *Reproof*. S. Paul has told

us,

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us, That *all Scriptures, inspir'd by God*, was given us, among other excellent Uses, for *Reproof*. 'Tis by them that we infallibly know, without the Pains of long natural Demonstration, what are the fix'd and certain Subjects of Reproof and Commendation; and it is an indiscreet, I might say an impious, thing, to draw Matter of Reproof out of our own Humors: For, what is this but to dictate a new Bible, and to suppose the Divine Inspir'd Writings imperfect? Ev'ry one is guilty of detracting from the Bible, who offers to make Actions Subjects of Reproof, which the Divine Oracles have not declar'd to be so. A wise Christian, who looks on the Christian Canon of Reproof to be perfect, need not fear making foul Blunders, or incurring the Censure of captiousness and impertinence, which are the two unlucky Apes of Reproof, except it be from some Men, who can *charge God foolishly*, as tho' he would call Good Evil and Evil Good. It may therefore be convenient to mention the Text which forbids the Act which he committed, or enjoyns the Duty which he omitted, and to desire him to declare his Judgment about it, before you apply your Reproof, that so his Conscience may speak before you, and your treading so surely may make your Reproof take the deeper Root in his Mind.

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It must be confess'd, there are some indecent Singularities which are offensive in Company, and do discredit them in whom they are observ'd; tho' the Gestures or Actions consider'd simply in themselves, are not Evil in their own Nature, nor forbidden by God, but are accidentally evil, because they are offensive, as deviations from Custom in indifferent Matters, for which indeed Custom is a Law: And therefore a Friend may very commendably strive to break his Friend of them, because by this means Peace is promoted and Offences are prevented. Nevertheless, it behoves a Friend not to express Indignation, when he speaks of them, since they are not Vices, or simply unlawful in their own Nature: And in such an Attempt he should chiefly urge, that we should keep Harmony with all Men, by complying with their Humors as far as we can without Sin, and displeasing God, always dreading to approach the Heart, and rashly imputing it to Affectation. Charity will sooner reckon it an Habit and an Infelicity contracted in Youth; and which for that Reason must be got rid of by degrees. But be sure you do not dehort him from it gravely, and with as much Solemnity as if it were declar'd Matter of Reproof by God; for we should always take Care to put a Distinction between Actions that are *necessarily* and *intrinsically*

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sically Evil, and those that are but *contingently* so; for if we should speak of offensive Singularities with that trembling and concern as we should when we reprove for a Fault, we should seem to be as solicitous to destroy a Habit, which is only displeasing to Men, as we are to destroy a Habit, which ought to displease Men, and does certainly displease God; which is to represent our selves, as having an equal Fear of God and Man, that is to say, as dreading *Infirmity* and *Omnipotence* alike. Besides, such a manner of Speaking about indifferent Habits would make our Reproofs for necessary Evils the less regarded, because this would make our Reproofs too frequent and trivial; by which means they will bear a hue of dastardly Fretfulness instead of the majestick Characters of Reproof. In short, we should take Care to admonish them against affecting them, for if they are affected they are wilful Violations of Peace, and so they are Sins: But however, affected Offences are not the Object of particular Reproof, because the Root of Affection is in the Heart, but the Springs of the Heart are invisible to us. Wherefore, all that we can do is solemnly to give a particular Admonition against affecting them. And when we have admonish'd them against affecting them, the best Art we can use to break them of them, whether they be af-

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fect'd or not, will be to smile them out of such Habits : By smiling you'l hint that they are ridiculous Actions and Objects of Laughter to you, as you are a risible Creature by Nature : And by struggling with your Sides at the Temptation, you will suggest, that tho' you could not help smiling, you would have help'd it if you could, for your not suffering your self to laugh will demonstrate that you are willing presently to withstand the Assault of any Temptation to such Carriage, which savours of Disrespect to a Friend ; for loud Laughter stirs up Rage, and no Man can endure to be made his Fellow-Creature's Baboon.

S E C T V.

Of LONG - SUFFERING, *a fourth Qualification in a Friendly Reprover.*

Long-Suffering is requisite to make us constant in Reproof, and not weary of well-doing, tho' our Friend is uneasie under Reproof. Reproof ought to be uneasie. Both the Reprover and the Reproved should be troubled at their being Occasion for Reproof. 'Tis this Uneasiness that makes patient Perseverance in Reproving our Friends

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a Virtue, and the Virtue *Long-Suffering* a necessary Qualification whenever we Reprove. Without this we shall quickly be discourag'd from ever reproving our Friend. We should consider one another's Infirmities; by bearing one another's Burthens we shall fulfil the Law of Christ. Man would fain be innocent tho' he is unclean from the Womb, and therefore we must allow him to be disturb'd while his Friend is smiting him. After the Potion is settl'd, perhaps that which was Gall in the Throat will be acknowledg'd to be Honey in the Stomach: And, grant the Worst, tho' he should be ungrateful a long while, yet your patient bearing with his Ingratitude against you, will shame him into a grateful Sense of your Long-Suffering Love. 'Tis very unaccountable to leave off Reproving because Reproof is bitter to the Palate. Many Friends have sown good Inclinations in one another, which, for all their gliding Displeasures, have shew'd their Heads above Ground at last. God is a God of Patience and Season. We should imitate him, and know when to sow a Reproof; and when we have cast it prudently into our Friend's Ear, learn to wait with Submission for the Usury of our Grain in due time. If the great God condescends to call and invite, after many gracious Invitations have been slighted, and many Fatherly Corrections

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have miss'd of Success, shall we think much to wait and condescend not to desert our Friends, even for repeated Abuses of our Reproof? Is the Servant above his Lord?

Briefly, Reproofs are generally own'd substantial Acts and Exercises of Love upon the Death-Bed. Which consideration, methinks should be a powerful Motive to Constancy in this Duty.

S E C T. VI.

Of GENTLENESS, a fifth *Qualification of a Friendly Reprover.*

Gentleness or Courtesie softens Hearts without Noise. Affability and humble Submission to all Men, and readily clasping with the lawful Desires of our Friend, and giving him the Precedency in Debates about indifferent Matters, especially in the Presence of others, arms Reproof with the most charming Endearments, ushers it with great Authority into his Closet. Wherefore be sure always to remember never to give Whisperers an Advantage of spoiling your Reproofs, or of Soiling them, by being able to tell him, when you so much as spoke disrespectfully of him, or made a Complaint of this or that personal Offence. Always

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ways set a Watch over your Lips, and keep the Wicket of your Mouth. *Speak evil of no Man*, that is the surest way never to speak Evil of your Friend. He that suffers his Friend's Faults to be the Entertainment of the Company behind his Back, abuses his Friend, if he tells him of a Fault before his Face, tho' never so privately. We cannot either jeer, or slander, or backbite and reprove the same Person, at least till we have repented of our Misdemeanours behind the Curtain.

Take Care farther, Friendly Reprover, not to let your Freedom with your Friend in private be blur'd by a clownish Carriage to him in Publick. Whoever contracts friendly Intercourse with you, honour him at all times according to his Character and Dignity all one as tho he were a Stranger; and tho' some may think this Formality, yet I'm sure 'tis such a Formality as Reason prescribes, for 'tis a foolish thing to adopt those for our Friends whom we don't really esteem, and very absurd (nay I can't conceive it possible) to forbear expressing Honour outwardly to those whom we inwardly revere, since we are naturally willing that our Friends should believe and know we have a sincere Respect for them. But, indeed, I don't wonder that those partial Friends who are only Partners in Vice, and employ their

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Tongues against the Absent, should condemn outward Expressions of Respect among Friends, since they have at best but a brutal Love for one another, and are uncapable of exchanging a rational Esteem. 'Tis Flattery in them, and therefore deservedly odious, since they're conscious they don't deserve it from one another. But I am giving Directions to true Friends, who are the Tutors and Patrons of each other's Souls, who discourse of those Subjects which belong to them, and scorn to turn Society into an Hell, and Salamander-like to delight to live in the Fire of Strife and Contention. If they talk of others 'tis to contrive to do 'em some good, and to make one another useful Servants to the Publick. In short, Flattery, Dissimulation and toyish Complements may be banish'd and yet regular Civility may be preserv'd. Friendship and Sincerity, and a useful Familiarity may be maintain'd without odd Names, and affected Bluntness, which befriends nothing but a licentious irregular Sociableness. To conclude this Section, Courtesie to our Friend will vindicate our Reproof from the Censure of Disrespect; and I hope nothing is to be accounted inconsiderable and fit to be rejected, which may gain a free access for your Reproof through your Friend's Ear, to his Heart and Affections, which is that Familiarity which

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regulates the noblest sort of Familiarity.

True Familiarity consists in the prudent exercise of a free and generous Interchange of Hearts among Friends: When Friends have such a generous Confidence in one another, after a long Experience, and many alternate Tryals of each other's Fidelity and Circumspection, as to be able, without Dalliance and Reluctance, to uncloset their Hearts upon any occasion: When they can confess their Sins humbly together, without Fear of being threatned to the World for their Simplicity: When they can mutually enumerate the peculiar Instances of God's gracious Providence and Care of them, without the least Dread of being posted up for Vain-glorious Pretenders: When they are so wise and happy as to have no Grief, no Joy which they durst not communicate: Friends may be truly said to be true Friends and Familiars. These are the Friends who may rationally rejoyce in one another: For such Friends, when the greedy Grave snatches them away, Grace as well as Nature wrests Tears from us: What Tongue can express that mighty Satisfaction which their being possess'd of an Intimate who is so trusty and discreet, must need afford? An Intimate, to whom I can venture to reveal all that I know of my self: To whom I can reveal those

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Deviations of my Mind, which, for ought I know, none but my God and my Jesus, my Tutelar Angel and my affectionate Pastor know besides my self: Who will bespeak my Tears for his Failings, and my Thanks for the Mercies which he has receiv'd from the Hands of our common Father in Heaven, who has an Ear always open to the pure and sincere: An Intimate who will use his daily Endeavour to make my Soul more rich and beauteous: Who will instil into me a Spirit of Thankfulness by his seasonable and decent Gratulations, and strive to make the Incense of my grateful Heart more acceptable to the great Patron of Angels and Men, by his Devotion and Gratitude to God on my behalf: Whilst millions of Souls, in all probability are made vain in their Imaginations by the Flatteries of their false Friends: Who will contribute towards my obtaining a Spirit of Humility, Penitence and Prostration of Spirit, by his Confession of his own Sins and his Reproofs of mine: A Spirit of Charity, by his fervent Intercessions: A Spirit of Vigilance, by his Admonitions: A Spirit of uncommon Zeal, by his powerful Exhortations: A Spirit of Prudence by his Counsel; a comprehensiveness of Understanding and a Volubility in the holy Dialect, by communicating whatever useful Maxim he has got by Books, Conversation, Sermons or
Expe-

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Experience: This is the Familiarity which enlarges the Understanding, rectifies the Will and sets us forward on our Journey to Happiness. Is not this therefore the noblest Familiarity and most becoming wise Men? According to this Account of Familiarity, Friends may be familiar without using the Language of the Plough, an affected Bluntness: The reason why I insist so much on this is, because I have observ'd 'tis an Art whereby the Devil, tho' few observe it, has promoted Unprofitableness and idle Jestings in Conversation. There may be a constant Use of such Expressions as denote Respect, without any Danger of Distance: This is convenient, that Friends, when they are together, may have that continual Sense of the Dignity of Human Nature, which is very necessary to procure us the true Advantages of Friendship: For 'tis this that is the Primary Cause of our Capableness of receiving mutual Benefit by Reproof.

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S E C T. VII.

Of GOODNESS, *the sixth Qualification for a Friendly Reprover.*

Goodness or Benignity and Usefulness in all Respects, as Opportunity favours, demonstrates a Man a Friend indeed. Men judge of the Sincerity of their Friends by universal, not single Kindness, especially if it be a Kindness which peculiarly Eyes the Soul. Such is the Frailty, so great is the Sottishness of lapsed Man! O how strangely are we immerg'd in Sense! But I will not dwell upon this melancholy Thought. Shew your self an entire Friend to your Friend: Trust him with great Secrets, even the Secrets of your Soul, as Pledges of your Secrecy, and of not taking Notice of his Faults to any Body else: Instruct him wherein he is ignorant, counsel him wherein he doubts, relieve him in Distress, readily receive and faithfully retain his Secrets, have an open Ear to any reasonable Request, comfort him in Affliction, as on the Bed of Sickness and in the Day of Adversity, when his Spirits are sad and low; vindicate his Innocence when he is defam'd; palliate his Faults when you hear him complain'd of; forgive

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forgive his particular Breaches of Trust in your self; have useful Conferences frequently with him; praise his good Actions behind his Back; congratulate any sort of Prosperity and his Virtues before his Face; exhort him to Perseverance in the ways of Piety, and in all laudable Designs and Endeavours; lastly, admonish him against Offences to come. Admonition is a great Act of Charity, and ev'ry Reproof should be back'd with it: It is a Shield against all Sins whether external or internal, and assists all the Faculties of the Soul. Wherefore, whenever you reprove your Friend for an actual, visible Fault, don't fail to forwarn him against it for the future; as also against those secret Maladies of the Soul, bad Suggestions and Habits of the Heart, of which the visible Sin seems mostly to bear a hue; for no human Eye can pierce the Heart, and therefore they are Subjects only of a general and indeterminate Reproof; but, however, they are the Subjects of particular Admonition. The being an Example of so many excellent and various Offices of judicious Friendship can't but captivate his Esteem, and open his Eyes to see that your Reproof is a Ray streaming from a Divine Principle of heavenly Love.

But

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But since Goodness is so lovely, certainly Gratitude for Goodness is comely and fitting; and therefore I can't but think it a Piece of Prudence, and very conducive to the Success of the Reproof at the very instant of your giving it, to mention to him such or such a great Kindness which he did for you, and to tell him that, that would have been Fuel of Horror to you one Day, if you had neglected to have reprov'd him for the present Fault, and that you expect him by way of Return to lay the Obligation of a Friendly Reproof upon you.

Lastly, To all your other Acts of Beneficence add one more; *frequent, earnest, particular and private Intercession* to God for his Soul. This is the greatest of them all. Thus we may be charitable to all Men, but we cannot allow ev'ry Name a Minute in our Retirement: Nevertheless, no Man would grudge it, or many Minutes upon an extraordinary occasion, upon a Relative or Friend whom he loves as his own Soul. Pray therefore for him, *That he may prosper even as his Soul prospers; That his Love may abound more and more in Knowledge, and in all Judgment; That he may approve of Reproof and Experience, and delight in all things that are excellent; That he may be sincere, and without Offence at the Day of Christ,*
being

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being filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the Glory and Praise of God. God's Arm is not shortened, that he should not save, though ours is.

S E C T. VIII.

Of FAITH, a seventh Qualification in a Friendly Reprover.

FAITH is so essential to constitute any Action Good and Christian, that without it it is impossible to please God. Ev'ry Attempt must be dedicated to him in the Name of our Lord Lord *Jesus Christ*, whose Blood shed upon the Cross was the sole living Fountain of Pardon and Reconciliation. We must remember that 'tis principally for the sake of this one Mediator that any of our Services are accepted by God. We were put by the Fall of *Adam* into such a state of Distance from God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, that had he not so lov'd the World as to send his Son to be a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World, and imparted of his Spirit liberally upon the Apostles, after our saviour's Ascension, for the sake of his inestimable Sacrifice and Victory over Death, and im-

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imparted ever since more or less of the same Spirit to all his Followers, none of us could have been in a Capacity of presenting any Oblation without Presumption, and without rather exchanging his Anger and Indignation than procuring his Favour; for the Unclean can offer no Clean Sacrifices 'till they are cleans'd from their Filthinesses, and the Return of the Spirit of God, without whose Aid and Presence 'tis impossible for us to purifie our selves from our original Turpitude. And since the Spirit comes upon his account, we must remember in ev'ry Undertaking that 'tis principally for his sake that any of our Services are accepted; and when we have offer'd it to God in the Name and Mediation of so great a Person as the first-begotten Son of God must needs be, we ought in Reverence to his Merits, notwithstanding our own unworthiness to countenance a cheerful and steady Confidence in God, as to the Event and Fruitfulness of Reproof.

If we verily believe that God is, and is a Rewarder of them that seek him in the humble Obedience of his Commands, we can't but rest satisfied in his Arms, and secure of a Reward to our selves of whatever Consequence the Reproof be to our Friend. God sees all the hidden Determinations of the Will, and notes down ev'ry loving Experiment in his Book; so that we need not
suspect

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suspect that we shall fail of a Reward for the discharge of our Duty. And then as to our Neighbour, tho' he's peevish and apt to be Senseless of his Spiritual Interest, for Sin is a very dangerous Sorceress, and our awkward Reproofs (for such ail, even the best Reproofs of sinful Creatures are, and rather irritate than heal of themselves) yet Faith fixes our Hope on God, and excites us humbly to bespeak God's Grace, to give us Prudence to reprove in such a Manner as becomes such Creatures as we are, to reprove and to prosper our Friend's Charity to the Health of our Friend's Soul, after we have us'd our best Endeavours. This Method, if any, is likely to succeed. And here it may not be amiss to caution you against Sacrificing to your own Net, and burning Incense to your own Drag, when your Reproof has took effect. 'Twas by his Breathing on your Project that you so happily caught a Soul: Give his Blessing therefore the Glory, lest in just indignation he deny it another Time.

And indeed one great Reason why general Reproofs have sometimes pierc'd some Men so deeply, even when particular ones have fail'd, is to teach us to look up to God who superintends all our Actions and Hearts, as the great Author of all Success; and for that Reason always to remember, That his Glory should principally be Ey'd, since the
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Conversions of all that repent, as well as the Obstinacy and Presumption of the Obdurate will terminate into his Glory in that great Day, when the King of Glory with a mighty Power shall open the Gates both of Heaven and Hell, and all human Souls, according to their different Demeanour here, shall be admitted into their everlasting state of consummate Bliss or Misery. This Consideration was entertain'd by S. *Augustin*, when he had unexpectedly been an Instrument of Conversion to *Alipius*, who, it seems, laid out too much time on the Races and other Diversions of the *Circus*, tho he had a long Time, in vain, laid in wait for a seasonable Application of a particular and design'd Reproof. Those of us, saith that admirable Father, who liv'd friendly together, us'd to bemoan the Riots that are rise upon such occasions, but especially *Alipius* and *Nebridius*, who would speak their Minds the most freely and familiarly nigh me: *Alipius* was born in the same Town as I was, some Years after me. When I first taught in my native Town and at Carthage, he had study'd with me, and had a great Kindness for me, because he took me for a good and a learn'd Man: He was one of a great Genius and eminent Virtue, so great indeed that it could not lie hid in his first Years: But the corrupt Morals of your Citizens grew so raging and prevalent, by reason of those vain and trifling Spectacles which

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which daily encourag'd Idleness in that Place, that they swept him away like a fierce Whirl pool, and plung'd him into a fierce Love with the Pastime of the Circus. And tho', at this Time, I was a publick Professor of Rhetorick, he was not then one of my Auditors, upon the account of a private Grudge between me and his Father: Nevertheless, I was very much concern'd to see such a great Hope in Danger of being shipwrecked; nay, indeed my Hope was almost expir'd, for his Levity and Madnes at that Time appear'd Mortal and Incurable: Besides, I had no fair Season or Pretence to Admonish or Reprove him; for I could not reprove him as a Master; and as for Friendship, I thought that could gain no standing in his Mind, being, I thought, his Father's Enmity had alienated his Mind from me. But thou, O Lord, didst teach him to slight and forget it, for he came and heard me at last, and very respectfully attended to, and consider'd upon my Lectures: In one of them I occasionally brush'd upon the Folly and Abuse of Publick Shews; which sunk so deep into the Youth that he was enrag'd with himself for his past Resort to them, and lov'd me more ardently than his Father could possibly hate me; that thy Words, O God of Love and Wonders might be verified; who hast said, Reprove a Wise Man and he will love thee. But indeed I had not reprov'd him: But thou canst use, in thy own good Time both the plotting and the ignorant to
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the Service of thy Designs: These Ways surpass our Thoughts; however thy Order and Method is just, comly and best; and we thy poor Creatures hence do learn to blush at the Insignificance of our Works, and do revere the Beauty and Depth of thy Counsel. Thou madest my Tongue sharper than a Sword, and his stupid Mind sensible by thy Cauticks, and hotter than burning Coals till thou hadst heat'd him: So happy is the Sor whom the Lord chasteneth. See S. Austin, l. 6. c. 7. of his Book of Confessions.

I leave the Reader to apply this Instance to his own Mind.

S E C T. IX.

Of MEEKNESS, the eighth Qualification of a Friendly Reprover.

THE Virtue *Meekness* consists, either in not being soon Angry, not being easily Provok'd, or Angry without a just Provocation, and when we should not be Angry; or, secondly, when we are Angry on a just occasion, in bounding that Anger, which S. Paul calls being *Angry without Sin*, for Anger is a Natural Passion: Meekness is not the Extinction of Anger, but our regular Use of it. Now Meekness, in both Senses, is a necessary Qualification for a Friendly

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Reprover: For, first, habitual Meekness, or seldom being angry, and never exerting it without just Provocation, is as great in effect as trivial and groundless Anger is in Shew. Who can withstand Meekness? When a meek Man, who is not known to be often or hastily angry, complains, a Friend will conclude that one of the Divine Tables is broken, for it must be something that is not only offensive to his Disposition but is really ill in its own Nature, that can provoke a *Moses* to exert Anger. A mean occasion will not raise such a one's Passion. But, moreover, Meekness is necessary too, because it fits us to bear Reproof patiently and thankfully, and it must be confess'd that such a Temper is necessary for a Reprover, that he may be one of an exemplary tameness when he is reprov'd: For how can he expect that Gratitude from others, which, when he is reprov'd, he will not express himself? No one will ever think such an one a sincere Reprover. In opposition therefore to such gross Hypocrisy, do you, when you reprove, chide your Friend for not reproofing you for a Fault which you have trac'd in your self by Reflection, and for which he did not reprove you, tho' he could not but observe it in you; that is to say, if ever the Case stands so indeed, Then you may say to him thus, or to this purpose; "If Impenitence for this Fault

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“Fault would have damn’d me, I should
 “have been never a whit help’d by you to
 “prevent the Cause of such eternal Misery.
 “Is not this very unkind?

And as habitual Meekness is a necessary Qualification for a Friendly Reprover, so, secondly, actual Meekness is a necessary Ingredient of a dextrous Reproof. Actual Meekness consists in moderating our Anger. *S. Paul* charges us particularly, to *Reprove in the Spirit of Meekness*, and afterwards subjoins this excellent Reason for it, *considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted*; to which give me leave to add, *and when tempted fall*: For, as ’tis no strange or unusual thing for us to be tempted in this state; so neither is it a surprizing Business for a Man to be overcome by Temptations. When we reprove a Friend, therefore, we should take Care to express our Grief and Anger (for Resentment has been shew’d to become a Reprover) without Pride and Fierceneses. It must be the Anger of a Friend, not the Anger of a Panther. *Be not high-minded but fear. Let him that stands, take heed lest he fall*, are excellent Sentences, and should always be writ upon our Minds, when we are going to reprove, that we may do our Duty without the Commission of a Sin. ’Tis a dreadful Presumption to tell a Person of a Fault only to tease and exasperate him: But I am not
 addressing

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addressing to such Wretches. No, no, there are too many, who, tho' they reprove with a benign intention, fly from a decent hatred of the Sin, and Sorrow, and Trouble for the Offence of their Friend, into an extravagant Anger with the Person who committed it. Hear me, my beloved Friends, Is this to reprove as Brethren? Rage is no fit Companion for Reproof: This Wrath of Man will not work the Righteousness of God in our Friend: The best Reprovers are not spotless as God. Men should, when they reprove, consider that they are Men, not Brutes and destitute of a thinking Capacity; and that they have to do with Men, not Angels, who are out of the Shot of Temptations. Friends should not, when they reprove, speak like Masters and Magistrates, but like Friends and Equals. Alas! What mean poor Mortals by a magisterial Carriage in reproof? Surely they forget that we all tread upon slippery Places, and wrestle with Principalities and Powers, often stumble and are often worsted: That tho' some stumble oftner than others, yet all stumble often enough to be lowly, and when they're trip'd up by a Temptation they stand in need of a helping Hand. Surely they forget that before Baptism they were polluted Lumps of Clay, and have frequently since contracted Guilt enough to

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have been thrown long ago into the Kennel of Devils for ever, if infinite Justice had dealt rigorously with them; and that 'tis by the Grace of Jesus they are what they are, capable of Heaven by true Repentance, and obnoxious to Hell, notwithstanding all Repentance, without the Application of his Merits. For God's sake, let us remember, and for Christ's sake, who does not *drag* but *draw* our Souls by his Spirit gently and compassionately, that when we reprove a Friend, Sinner speaks to Sinner, lest Haughtiness and Wrath anathematize our over-pompous Charity in the Sight of God, with whom a meek and quiet Spirit is of great Price. When Friends carry themselves like Furies to their Friends, the Sense of the Sin (to quicken which is the peculiar Drift of Friendly Reproof) is drown'd in that Amazement and Vexation which boisterous Passion is wont to raise. 'Tis to be Precedents of Sin, and perhaps a greater Sin than the present Subject of our Reproof, even whilst we bring an Action against it. But God will not suffer the Meek to reprove so awkwardly, for *them that are meek God will guide in Judgment.* A Mind that is not ruff'd with disorderly Passions will not suffer a Man to reprove his Friend, but when his Friend is sedate and fit to receive it with Profit. The Meek Man reproves with a degree of Anger proportion'd

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tion'd to the degree of the Nature of the Crime, and not only weighs it's Aggravations, but also considers its Alleviations, and to be sure he always takes Care never to be hurried into that degree of Anger which does not comport with a due Respect for Human Nature, which becomes him as a Fellow-partaker of it ; and because in this State the Image of God, which was originally impress'd on all Men, cannot be perfectly obliterated. A meek Man never reproves, only to fluce a private Humor, or unseasonably ; but he patiently watches for a convenient Opportunity to promote a Soul : He hugs and makes much of all Seasons to do good in : He is not rash and temerarious ; he does not censure, envy, repine or fret, nor meddle where his Fingers have no right to feel : He constantly uses his Tongue as an Instrument of Good and a Messenger of God : He always avoids hurtful Blabbing and Fomenting Strife and Folly by needlessly multiplying Words : He imitates the Divine Spirit, the Arch-reprover of Mankind, by reproving in a private Place, and in a soft Voice, mingling with his Resentment a powerful and commanding Tendernefs : His Tears are not as the Tears of the revengeful, Resemblances of the Sparks of Hell-fire, but they are the overflowing Emanations of a silently active Love ; and, if I may be al-

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How'd so to speak, effluvia's of the Bowels of the long-suffering God, and therefore they can't but be successful Spels for good to the reprov'd, unless he has a Heart of Adamant, a Conscience all incrusted over with numerous Sins, that have settled themselves into invincible Habits, and a Mind entomb'd in Sense.

S E C T. X.

Of TEMPERANCE, the ninth and last Qualification in a Friendly Reprover.

THAT *Temperance* is a necessary Qualification in a Reprover, is so obnoxious that I need not spend Time to prove it, since no body will listen to the Reproof of a debauch'd, flagitious and intemperate Fellow. For his Reproof will never be taken for a serious Reproof, who is never serious himself but when his Drunkenness tyes his Tongue, and the Diseases consequent upon his immoderate Use of sensual Pleasures confine him to his Bed. This can't properly be call'd a voluntary Gravity, and 'tis a very dangerous Error to think that such a Repentance will suffice to carry us to Heaven. Besides, I have premis'd that a preconceiv'd Belief

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Belief of the Reprover's good Intention, Friendship and Secrecy (for retentiveness of Secrets is one peculiar Office of Friendship) is one great Recommendation of Reproof. But who is there that cann't more than conjecture that a sottish Fellow, who vomits out his Breast before Enemies as well as Friends, can be no secure Cabinet to lay up Secrets in?

I have now spoke as much as I thought would be convenient concerning those nine Qualifications which constitute a Friendly Reprover, viz. Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Temperance, and have no more to say of them than with the great Apostle that mention'd them in this Order, *Against such there is no Law.* A Reproof thus mannag'd cann't justly be excepted against. Such a Reproof is a true *Friendly Reproof*, if any Reproof can deserve the Name of *Friendly*. Is a Friend qualified with these Virtues? He need not fear but he will reprove his Friend with Success and little Offence. And if his kind Aim should meet with a Frustration, 'tis the reprov'd Person's Fault, not the Reprover's.

As for those, who tho' they are utterly, or for the most part destitute of 'em, will be reprov'g, they had as good lecture to the Winds. Indeed thorough-pac'd Christians, whose extraordinary Prudence and emi-

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nent Advances in Piety enable 'em to turn Calumnies and Curses into Blessings, may be the better for such sinister Reproofs and Reprovers, but they may thank themselves, not their Reprovers for it. Ordinarily speaking, Reproof is more or less Successful, according as those who offer it do administer it, and are more or less spiritually prepar'd.

After so much has been said concerning the Qualifications of a Friendly Reprover, the Reader may admire that I have not spoke (except it be occasionally) concerning Prudence, which is generally accounted, as in reality it is, one of the principal Ornaments of a Friendly Reprover: To abate the Reader's Surprize for this Oversight, I desire him to consider, 1. That to speak largely of Prudence in general would take up too much compass in this little Tract, and, besides, 'twill be more conveniently done in a particular Discourse about Counsel. And then, 2. That Prudence consider'd abstractly, as the Qualification of a Friendly Reprover, 'tis the natural Result or Off-spring of all those Qualifications which I have already insisted on: They are all of them, as it were, means tending to this End: For first, do's not Religious Prudence consist in the Choice of some Divine End and Undertaking, and in

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in prosecuting any Undertaking of that Nature knowingly, upon good Principles, by wise Rules, with Wariness, Vigour and Constancy? Now (to look back a little while) Does not Spiritual Love make the Restitution and Renovation of the Divine Image in our Brother, the End of our Reproof, and a Desire of being in God's Favour, and being more and more assimilated to the Source of Charity and Blessedness, the Principle of our Reproof? Do's not Spiritual Joy clear it from the Ignominy of being taken for Counterfeit and Spurious? Do's not Peace give the Reprover a becoming Majesty, and propose a sure Canon to walk by, as to the Matter of our Reproof? Do's not Faith make us humble, full of pious Assurance and Satisfaction? Does not Meekness and Temperance always preserve our Minds on their Guard, and so make them capable of forming fit Stratagems, and of sufficient Strength to encounter with our Friend's Infirmities? Do not these Virtues shew the fittest Seasons and Methods of handling a Friend after a late Lapse? Lastly, Do not Gentleness, Goodness and Long-Suffering enable us to be patient and unwearied in this sort of Well-doing? For who can be so foolish as to suffer all his Kindness in other Respects, to putrifie and be lost, only for want of Repeating one Part of the Beneficence? especially with a

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very little Consideration, he may sufficiently satisfy himself that this will mightily enhance the Value and Dignity of all his other Assistances. But, secondly, the Consideration of the Nature of Friendly Reproof has furnish'd us with many useful Rules for the dextrous Application of Friendly Reproof; now a dextrous Reprover is a prudent Reprover, and I do not question that if those Rules (which by way of Consequence have been interspers'd in this Chapter be conscientiously observ'd) but the meanest Christian may have Prudence enough to reprove his Friend. But tho I speak thus, I am very sensible that there have been many Rules given besides these; nay, indeed, some which run full but against them: But 'twas for want of distinguishing between those Places in which the Scriptures speak of Admonition, or Casual, or Episcopal, or other sorts of Reproof (which must be known by tracing the Connection that the Places usually cited have with the Context) and others that peculiarly respect Friendly Reproof. Wherefore, since the careful Use of this Distinction will serve for a general Answer to all that oppose me herein, I shall not swell the Chapter with a particular insistence on ev'ry contrary Direction: For the same Reason I do not think it necessary to beg the World Pardon for not Transcribing all those

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Texts which Concordances and Systems have inconsiderately pil'd together. Thirdly, I desire it may be consider'd that these are the Qualifications which *S. Paul* has particularly allign'd. And I hope we need not doubt but that God will bless those Means which he himself has instituted: Can we have a better Guide than the Blessed Spirit? Prudence as well as Courage are his Gifts: Those that bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit are under his peculiar Conduct and Tuition, and are the Objects of his extraordinary Bounty (I mean a greater Measure of his ordinary Gifts) and therefore have no reason to dread a Want of true and real Prudence; for the Nature of true Prudence cannot be enquir'd after to any purpose among the Crowd, who make ev'ry Sense a *Pythagoras*, and swear an implicit Faith to them, but in God's Word and our Closets, where the Divine Spirit confers with pure Souls. When all is done, the Race is not to the Swift, 'tis God that must make us Successful in the Administration of Reproof as well as other Affairs; and if we follow the Methods which he has prescrib'd, we may chearfully rest on the great Disposer of all Events: He that lives well and loves much is most likely to reprove best.

C H A P. V.

Detecting the Vanity of those several Excuses which have been fram'd for the Omission of Friendly Reproof.

BY this Time I hope we may bring those who neglect this Duty to the Bar, and be able to see through those Cobweb-Excuses that Men usually bring for their not reproving their Friends.

And first, Men in vain ask, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* Will not ev'ry Man bear his own Burthen? 'Tis well if I can preserve my own Soul with all my Care and Diligence: Truly, I find that difficult enough. Experience has clearly verified to me those Words of our blessed Lord, Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life. There is no need for me to be bound for others: For does it follow, that because you dare not undertake to fit and dress another Man's Soul for Eternal Salvation in another World, you may not lawfully contribute all you can to the fitting of him

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him for it? Will the doing another a good turn, when you have a fair Opportunity, increase the Difficulty of your Preparation for Heaven? Is not doing your Duty to God and Man one part of that Preparation? How then, since Friendly Reproof is both a Natural and Christian Duty, can the Performance of it in due Season be a Hindrance in your Preparation for Heaven? Reproving our Friend agrees with the Golden Rule of *Jesús*, *the Law* and *the Prophets*; *Whatsoever you would that Men should do unto you, that do unto them, for this is the Will of your Heavenly Father.* Any wise Man and knowing Christian must acknowledge that he would have his Friend reprove him when he commits a visible Fault: Why then should he think much to reprove his Friend? Alas! Men fondly imagine, That if they avoid Commissions, that is sufficient to save 'em; but I must plainly tell 'em that gross Omissions are not good Preparations for Heaven, for he that does not what God commands him to do, disobey's God's Commands as well as he who does what God forbids him. In short, any Man in Misery would be reliev'd. Charity is Justice among Christians, and without it we must never expect to set one Foot in the Kingdom of Heaven.

In vain, secondly, Men pretend, if they should reprove ev'ry one whom they see com-
mit

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mit Faults, they should have so much Work to do as to have no Time to follow their Calling, for if they mind their Business closely they can't see so many Faults in others. All Sins should be unpleasant to their Eyes. They are so far from being enjoyn'd by their Duty to reprove, that they ought to scorn, to make a Business or a Recreation of hunting after Matter of Reproof. Besides, it has been shewn, That Providence expects us very rarely to reprove any but our Friends and Intimates, and I hope that which seldom happens will not take up a Man's whole Time. Is your Friend no more to you than any Body? No Man of Principles will think his Friend not worth his troubling his Head about. Since 'tis inconsistent with any but the Pragmatical to reprove all Offenders whom we know to be such, we ought to reprove our Friends the more constantly. Our Penitence is confin'd to a few Objects, which few should be our Friends. Reproving then can't devour much time. There are none so hurried with Business but they will allow themselves Times of Relaxation. Now, at these times we are with our Friends: The being in their Company often refreshes and whets our Appetite to Business again: It renews and invigorates our Faculties with fresh Vigor and Briskness for the Employments of our Calling; and when Friends are together how can they

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they lay out their Conversation better than in filing and burnishing one another's Lives? If our Business will not permit us to secure our everlasting Salvation, we had as good, nay better, be cast, with a Millstone about our Necks, into the Sea, as to mind it: Such Business is as bad or worse than Idleness.

In vain, thirdly, Men urge our Saviour's and *S. Paul's*, forbidding us to judge one another, against giving Reproof; for we must not suppose that God has forbid any thing in those Texts which he hath commanded in others. We ought not to judge Men's Hearts, but we may and ought to judge of the different Natures of Human Actions, for we are not to call Good Evil, nor Evil Good, and those that are visibly Evil may be judg'd and reprov'd in our Friends, without invading God's Right. We can't pass a final and fixt Sentence upon the State of any Man's Soul, for he stands or falls before the universal Sovereign of the World; but we may pass a Sentence on some of his particular Actions, to prevent his Falling before his Lord. This is Charity, whereas the other is Uncharitableness, which makes a very wide Difference between 'em. Moreover, we have answer'd this Objection sufficiently, because we have already directed you very largely how to distinguish Reproof from Censoriousness; and one Rule given concerning applying Reproof

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proof was not to reprove for indifferent Matters, but only for those visible Actions which we can make out to be Faults by any Part of God's Word.

In vain, fourthly, say some, 'Tis the Magistrate's Business to reprove: For tho' the Magistrate must reprove for the more heinous Breaches of the Law, for the Safety of Government; yet it is a Friend's Province to put a Stop to ill Customs betimes, that his Friend may not by degrees become such a scandalous Offender as to deserve the Reproof of the Magistrate.

In vain, fifthly, some tell us, it goes against me to reprove, *I am too good-natur'd to reprove my Friend often, because I can't but be an Instrument of Uneasiness to him, and a burthensom Companion by so doing*: For 'tis not the causing an Uneasiness to our Carnal Dispositions, that will mantle our Neglect of a positive Duty. Without doubt, if Friends reprove one another for little or no Cause, such as innocent Freedoms, Festivities and Infirmities that are so inseparable to Human Nature in this State, and therefore can't properly be call'd wilful, they will unavoidably reprove too often, and with great Offence, for 'tis a great Tryal of a Man's Patience to be perpetually chid for what he cannot avoid. Avoidable Infirmities only are the Subjects of Reproof. But if a Friend
can't

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can't safely reprove for such lesser Freedoms, their Case is very pitiable who think they may lawfully censure good Men, that are Strangers to 'em, for such Infirmities more than these good Men censure them, notwithstanding their loose and licentious Lives. And 'tis worth observing, That if Friends reprove for none but real and unavoidable Faults, that 'tis charitably to be hop'd that there will not be such numerous Occasions of Reproof among Friends, who are so conscientious as to give and receive Reproof, and if there should be, this uneasiness will diminish and wear away by degrees, with occasions of Reproof, through the Delight which its being an Instrument of a correct Life will procure: for frequent Reproof is the way to weary a Friend out of his Faults, and so Friends prevent, by this means, the trouble of frequently receiving and giving Reproof, and the Sin not only of positively, but even so much as negatively flattering one another. Whether you reprove your Friend or no, uneasiness for his Sins must be felt some time or other, to keep him from flaming for ever in Hell. If he will be comforted he must mourn for his Sins, *Blessed are they that mourn thus*, for their Tears make Angels rejoyce, and they shall rejoyce themselves to all Eternity. So that by creating or exaggerating this wholsom uneasiness you
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do him a great and unspeakable Kindness: You should not fear your Friend's present Displeasure more than his Eternal Ruin. That dastardly, cereous Temper, which is the Cause of Men's not reproving one another, is falsely call'd *good Nature*; 'tis a judicious Kindness only that can deserve that Name. He that is good-natur'd in the first Sense does but consult his Ease and fleshly Interest, has not a regard to Futurity: All that he cares for is to please and benefit his Friend in those Cases which are sufficient to uphold a worldly Correspondence and Dearness: He has no Divine Sensation nor Principle of Divine Life in him, for if he had he would know, that reproving one another here, however uneasy it is for the present, is a part of Discipline to admit us into the state of eternal Gratulation. In short, 'tis uneasy to ev'ry good Man to reprove his Friend; 'tis his hearty Wish, that there were no need of Reproving; but he considers, that this is a state of Tryal and Lability, and therefore contentedly submits to God and obeys him, since he has enjoyn'd him to reprove, tho it interrupt the Ease of his Mind here; and he that will not do his Friend a good Office but when it may be done without the least Trouble, does but very cheap Kindnesses, and so cheapens and undervalues his Friendship.

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In vain, sixthly, you pretend that you do not reprove because your Reproof is not successful, and is very much abus'd and misnam'd, for Men's Errors and Wickednesses will not satisfy for your Neglects. Discharge your Duty, reprove whom and as you ought to do, and be constant in well-doing and your Charity is the greater, and therefore will find the greater Recompence, because it is indefatigable, and you suffer for it. Obedience to God's Commands is sure of a Reward, which should be a sufficient Motive to the true Disciples of Christ. But we have no Promise that ev'ry Reproof shall be bless'd with Success upon the reprov'd, and therefore our Saviour, when he commanded us, *If a Man shall trespass, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone,* adds, *If he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy Brother*; as if he had said, This is a very likely way to gain thy Brother, perhaps thou mayest gain thy Brother. The Rule is certainly good, but the Success is uncertain.

In vain, seventhly, says another, my Friend commits many Faults which I know nothing of; how then shall I reprove him for them? How indeed? This is a foolish Question certainly, for because you are not bound to reprove for those Faults which you know nothing of, therefore you will not reprove him for those that you do know of. Good Christian,

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Christian, learn to be asham'd of such idle Sophistry; reprove him for his visible Faults, and your Duty is done. God does not require us to do what 'tis impossible for us to do. Others may perhaps be apt to say, as vainly, we have too many Faults of our own to reprove others. I ask those why they don't take care to have fewer. Again, all Men's having Faults proves Friendly Reproof the more strongly to be a Friendly and Social Duty.

But lastly, many may complain, That they are not prequalified to reprove with Prudence, and the like. Either these Persons who say they are not prequalified, are prequalified, or they are not prequalified. If they are prequalified, they tell a gross Lie: If they are not, they are not good Christians: For all the foremention'd Qualifications are as necessary to form a good Christian as they are to make a Man a good Reprover. Men's not loving God above all things, immoderate Love of the Creatures, want of Spiritual Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Habitual and Actual Meekness, and the like, proceeds from a mere formal Profession of Christianity; and since all Christians are capable of these Virtues, unless they deck their Souls with 'em as soon as possible they can, this Excuse will not only be rejected as frivolous at the last Day, but as
more

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more inexcusable than even that Neglect of the Duty for which they apologize with it.

There are many other Excuses of the like Nature, which if I should stand to answer particularly, would distend this Chapter to too great a Bulk, and may be easily answer'd by a close Attention to those Principles which have run through this Discourse, and by which I presume I have sufficiently refuted the foremention'd ones: For which Reason, I think it would be an unpardonable Abuse of good Men's Candor and Patience, and a too culpable Compliance with the affected Perverseness of those wicked Christians, who in Truth have no Inclination to promote the good of Souls, to crowd 'em into this little Book.

Search your Hearts therefore, Christians, penetrate 'em to the Core, and see whether or no your true Reasons are not all, or some of these, unconcernedness to obey the Divine Commands, Dread of the Disgrace, or Shame of a Repulse, want of Zeal for God and Virtue, or want of judicious Love for Souls and your Friends, or an Approbation of your Friends Sins, and an unwillingness to set them an Example, to disturb your quiet Enjoyment of some darling Sins, which you your selves actually are (and which is worse) too likely to be impenitently guilty of till you drop through the Grave into everlasting Torments.

C H A P.

C H A P. VI.

*Proposing some Motives for the
Encouragement of the frequent
Exercise of Friendly Reproof.*

HAVING detected the Emptiness of those Excuses which have been fram'd for the Epidemical Neglect of Friendly Reproof, I proceed now earnestly to exhort you to throw away all foolish Pretences for the future, and to resolve to reprove your Friends as becomes Christians. Which that you may do, I beseech you,

I. Consider, first, you obey one of Christ's Commands when you reprove, which will be matter of Peace and Satisfaction to the Conscience, whatever the Issue of it be here. And,

II. Consider, secondly, by omitting to reprove your Friend you disobey an express Command, and by not reproving him for some Faults, you would have heap'd to your self Treasures of Wrath, even tho' you had been but an Heathen : Of which sort are all Transgressions against the Light of Nature :

How

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How horrible must this Neglect then be in a Christian ?

III. Consider, thirdly, what an excellent Duty 'tis : 'Tis an Act of Charity to the Soul, and thereby an Act of Charity inclusively to the whole Man, which is an Essence of an Immortal Nature, capable of Eternal Happiness or Eternal Misery, an Essence for which Jesus himself shed his Blood to redeem it from Sin ; to destroy which, in this Essence, is the Aim of Reproof, that it may be deliver'd from that Eternal Misery and Vengeance into which Sin precipitates all its Slaves. Oh ! How must it transport you to see Souls triumphing in Angelical Glory, who, for ought you know had never come thither had not God's Providence done you the Honour to have us'd you as an Instrument in his Hand of their Conversion and Glorification pursuant thereto.

IV. Consider, fourthly, on the other hand, what Horror the Eternal Damnation of your impenitent Familiars must needs excite in you : Familiars, with whom you have committed many Sins, and whom perhaps you first betray'd into a sinful Course of Life, but never reprov'd 'em for it or begg'd their Pardon for shewing your self so much an Enemy to 'em, by deluding them when they took you for a true and real Friend : Familiars, who, for ought you know, had never plung'd
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themselves into that miserable Condition, if you had but piously husbanded the Advantage of your suppos'd Friendship, which would have introduc'd your Reproof with much Interest and Authority into their Breasts.

V. Consider, fifthly, how impossible it is to quit the Friend without promoting your Friend's good as much as you can, and consequently without reproving him sometimes, since the best Person sometimes wants Reproof, and none but bad Men, who are incapable of true Friendship, can want Ability and suitable Endowments to reprove. Will you be a Traytor? Will you be ungrateful to him who is a Benefactor continually to you?

VI. Consider, sixthly, what a beautiful Act of Charity Christian Friendly Reproof is, if it be well manag'd, and every Christian may manage it well, by God's Help, if he will. In this Act almost all the Human Passions are in Agitation, and every one of these Passions exerted on its proper Object, and kept within its due Bounds: For 'tis compounded of Grief for our Friend's Sin, Anger with the Sinner, kindled by a just Hatred of the Sin, and that over-aw'd and disciplin'd by a peculiar Love for his Person, Joy for the Discovery of the Sin, since it is befallen him, and there is no possibility of
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unsinning any Sin, and we have hereby an Opportunity to heal him, Fear of his Ruin, govern'd by a comfortable Hope that he will recover: In short, the whole Chorus of Human Passions is made unanimous and virtuous by their ev'ry one of them taking up that space, and being intended on that Object which the Decree of God and Primitive Nature has mark'd out for 'em.

VII. Consider, seventhly, of what a noble Stock of Virtues 'tis descended. A fix'd and exalted Love of God, Complacency in all excellent Examples, Charity to the whole Creation, regulated Passions, and unwearied Longanimity, Universal Usefulness, a peculiar Condescension, a canonical Temperance, Meekness, Magnanimity, and a constant Peaceableness of Behaviour, are all, as it were so many necessary Materials to build this one beautiful Fabrick.

VIII. Consider, eighthly, what a splendid Train of Blessings are the Equipage and Attendance of it; for by giving Friendly Reproof we tye our selves the faster to a constancy of regular Demeanour and Christian Circumspection for the Sake of the Success of our Reproof: We engage those whom we reprove, in Gratitude and by way of Debt, to be watchful over us for our good, in the same manner. We endear our Souls to God's Blessing upon our Spiritual Attempts

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Attempts and Protection against all our Spiritual Enemies : We bespeak a greater Measure of his Grace to adorn and strengthen them with all the Virtues and ordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and admit our selves the peculiar Pupils of that excellent Tutor, to guide us in the sure way to Heaven.

IX. Consider, ninthly, that we hereby make our Names precious to the publick Body, of which we are Members, both Ecclesiastical and Civil, because Friendly Reproof tends to make the reprov'd make both a quicker and richer Improvement under the Minister's Reproof, and prevents him from running into those Crimes which are the Subjects of the Magistrate's Reproof, as may be observ'd in our Saviour's Directions concerning our giving Reproof, and the Order and Gradations of it. *If thy brother, says our blessed Lord, shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between him and thee alone; if he shall hear thee thou hast gain'd thy brother: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three Witnesses every word may be establish'd: And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man or a publican,* Match. 18. 15. So that we may see we hereby do some Service to our Country, by making our Friend a more useful Member of the

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the Commonwealth, the holy Catholick and his National Church. The better Christian we make our Friend, the better he will be in all Relations and Conditions of Life.

X. Consider, tenthly, we lay up in store for our selves many Gratitudes in Heaven, from our Friends; who will then be forc'd with Joy and Exaltation to declare, That a calm and prudent Reproof is the richest Present we can make to a Friend here on Earth.

Certainly all these Blessings crowning your Magnanimity and Spiritual Love, will recompence the Luxations of your Friend's Affection here, upon the account of your reproving him for his good, which ought always to be prefer'd before his transient Smiles, that may be purchas'd by sordid Flatteries, which are very cheap and vile Grati-fications: Especially if we consider,

XI. Eleventhly, That the ever-blessed Spirit of God sets us an Example ev'ry Day upon our own Minds, an Example of a silent but powerful Reproof: He sets all our Sins in order before us, and reproves us for those which are invisible to the Eyes of others, so that he is an Example of Constancy in this Duty to us. Neither need you wonder at this, if you can be prevail'd on to consider,

Lastly, That there is no room for Re-proof in the other World. All of us there

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shall be either in a State of perfect Bliss, or a State of Eternal and perfect Misery. If our Friends are in the number of the Happy above, they will be above the need of the Assistance of Reproof: If they are condemned to everlasting Misery, no Reproof will do 'em any good, for there is no Redemption out of Hell. Consider therefore once more, I beseech you, of what has been said, whilst Consideration can be useful.

C H A P. VII.

An instructive Address to Reprov'd Persons, concerning a grateful Improvement of Friendly Reproof.

Hitherto I have been speaking concerning giving Reproof, 'tis high Time now to pass from the Reprover and visit the Reprov'd, in order to speak something concerning the due receiving Reproof. And here every one is apt to say, *'Tis better to give than to receive*: Which universal Humor of corrupt Mankind makes it seasonable to
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write a Word or two to assuage Men's Uneasiness when they are reprov'd. An Uneasiness becomes 'em, but this Uneasiness must be steer'd and mitigated by Reason: It must not be immoderate. If we are reprov'd undeserv'dly, we ought to make our Defence modestly, and still thank the Reprover for his Good Will. Now those who don't regulate and bound their Uneasiness when they are reprov'd, whether justly or unjustly, would do well to consider that immoderate Fretfulness under a well manag'd Reproof, must proceed from either a scornful haughty Temper, or an habitual Brutishness of Soul. Men would fain have others think that they are wholly free from Pollution and Guilt, and not Sinners like their Neighbours the Publicans; which unequal Justification of themselves makes them carry themselves forwardly to those who inspect their Carriage for their good, and apt to think that they are above the Assistance of their Fellow-Creatures. But does not such Pride provoke God, who is jealous of his Honour, and will not bear being vy'd with by any of his silly Creatures? Unity and Independence are incommunicable Perfections in God. We don't stand and fall by our own Sentence: It is not forward and lofty Thoughts of our own Dignity that will bribe or scare God into a false Judgment and Preference of us before

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all Mankind. Neither will our swollen Imagination byass and oblige other Men into a Conspiracy against the Truth. They know that we are Men, and Branches of the same corrupt Stem with themselves, since they see us sin as well as themselves. They will not trouble themselves to ask us whether we are Sinners or not, when we palpably offend under their Eyes. Not only the great God, but even weak infirm Man is not to be mocked in this case. So that proud Rejection of Reproof is as unlikely to procure Reputation with Men as it is to obtain the Favour of God. Consider, I intreat you, that tho' your Reprover had never told you of your Fault, he would have known it, and might have made it a Subject of Publick Merriment and Derision among your Flatterers and Enemies, instead of reproving you kindly and privately, that you may repair the Loss of your Reputation by your future strictness. In short, by your indecent Pride and Rage you discover your self more and more what you most industriously avoid to seem. For no Man, doubtless is the less a Sinner for being obstinately such. Brutish Carriage is but an ill Stratagem to fish for Esteem with.

But nothing, secondly, can be a greater sign of Brutishness than scornful and untoward Behaviour to a Friendly Reprover. For
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consider, what foul Ingratitude it is to resist such a beautiful Act of Love, and to affront a true Friend for shewing himself friendly, when so few now will shew themselves such in this Respect. Alas ! he could easily have enjoy'd your Smiles by a lazy Silence that flatters Sense ; but being a true Friend he cannot, like Flatterers, enjoy himself, or relish your Smiles with any Delight, whilst Smiles are not seasonable, and you are in the high Road to Eternal Destruction. Scorners of Reproof shew themselves brutish, because they don't behave themselves like Creatures capable of Consideration ; for if they did consider, they would shew themselves Men, that know Sin to be the greatest Evil, because it is opposite to the supreme Good, and therefore would know that their Deliverance from that is the greatest Deliverance. These are the Thoughts and Sentiments which will not suffer Men to kick at the Hand that offers to help 'em out of the Gulph of Sin, which leads to Eternal Damnation. Considerate Men know that it is good for them to be corrected and reprov'd in time, that they may not still go on astray, and so be condemn'd for ever. They will kiss the Rod before God in justice turn it into a Serpent, and make that which should have melted, an Instrument of hardning their Hearts. The greatest Mercies, if they are

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abus'd, will prove the greatest Judgments. A lasting Unsuccessfulness under Friendly Reproofs gives a Friend such a great occasion of dissolving his Friendship, that if your Friend has a true Notion of Christian Friendship (as doubtless one who reproves his Friend with a Christian Spirit has) he must think it his Duty to discipline you after many Reproofs have been, in vain, by professedly cancelling all particular concern for you: Long-Suffering has its proper Limits, and when 'tis trampled on, will provoke him that has it not, to throw Pearls before Swine only to be trod under Foot. Stubbornness must be cur'd by suitable Severity. 'Tis true, a Consciousness of good Intention props up a Man's Spirit, after his Kindness has been very much abus'd: He has done his Part, and may expect his Reward. Nevertheless, since we are confin'd to no particular Person, tho' Friendship must be exercis'd with some, a Man may reasonably, especially when he has been very patient, seek out a Friend who is more worthy of his special Care and Respect. Success in God's Eye is Satisfactory alone; but Success upon the Reprov'd also is very desirable, and is necessary to heighten our Alacrity, if we can find a Heart that is malleable to Reproof, receives it kindly, and makes the Reproof fructifie in the Reprov'd. One would not willingly be always wasting
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Seed a barren Soyl, a perverse Intimate, who when he should obey the first Call to Repentance, lights Call upon Call, and baffles Reproof after Reproof, till every Fault is grown to that strong Head, that he is as hard to be converted as that Wretch was to be dispossest, who was belieg'd with a Legion of Devils. True, our Reproofs clear us from the Imputation of a perverse Friend's Blood; but to see it spilt whilst he is our Friend, creates much Trouble. When a Friend for a long time has refus'd to receive Reproof as he ought, we are exempted from our Obligation to reprove him as a Friend, because by his Unfriendliness he has made our Tye to such a near Correspondence with him, void. Such an one shews such Signs of the dereliction of God's Spirit, that all we have to do, till he mends, is to bespeak with strong Prayers and Agonies some awakening Affliction, which is a Divine Reproof, since Human Reproof proves so weak. But in this last we must not too hastily rescind our Contract: this Sentence, it must be remembered, must be pass'd with much struggling, and after Charity has had its perfect Work. Wherefore, as you dread falling into one of the most execrable Conditions that you are liable to here, for such your justifiably being deserted by a faithful Friend, is, I desire you to make the fastest Improvement that you

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can under ev'ry Reproof: Consider that your Friend is your adopted Father: What your Father was to you in your Youth, he is now: Now a wise Son is better for Correction. It must be confest that all Sins can't be conquer'd quickly, but yet they may be conquer'd after more or less Tract of Time: And you must carefully beware of Mocking your self into a Toleration of Sin in you, and a neglect of fit and requisite Repentance, by a frequent and formal Use of this Pretext. Beware of resolving to justify your self in an ill Matter; love Truth, tho' she condemn you for the present, lest you be condemn'd eternally. Accustom your self to examin the Justice of ev'ry Reproof, because that is the way to imprint ev'ry just Reproof the deeper in your Mind, and so will be a means of making it more conducive to your Manners, by exhibiting the reasonableness of it the clearer to you; for mild Reception of Reproof without that, tho' 'tis far better than ungrateful turning it from you, will not answer the proper End of Reproof, viz. the Purification of our Hearts, and the Amendment of our Lives. Another Art of curing this rise Inclination to Untractableness under Reproof, is the Reprov'd's transferring the Indictment to a third Person: Thus Selfishness may be remov'd and the Ugliness of the Act will appear the plainer, and by

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by consequence the Reasonableness of the Reproof will exert it self also with the more Advantage. The Truth of this may be evinced by what *David* said to *Nathan's* Parable, whereby he made way for a successful Application of his Reproof. The last Method that is proper to be us'd in order to make us grateful when reprov'd, is Prayer to God for a meek and hearing Heart, and the agreeing upon some particular Times of giving and receiving Reproof mutually for known Faults, and confessing secret Faults to one another: For solemn Seasons make the Mind considerate, and presuppose a good Resolution, whatever Defect there may be in our natural Temper. Repetition of such Exercise will make it habitual and easie, as easie I mean as Acts of that Nature can and ought to be; for Stupidness under Reproof is far from being commendable. It must be confess'd that there is an Uneasiness which shoots out of a sharp Sense of the mischievous Familiarity of Sin with the Soul, which cannot laudably be escap'd. It becomes us to examine the Justice of the Reproof, that by fixing our Thoughts the more intently upon it, if it be just, our Compunction may be the severer; and if it be not just, the Consideration of the great Kindness it would have done us, supposing it had been just, may be so far from rendring us ungrateful,

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as to make us the more thankful to the Reprover ; and tho' it became him to have reprov'd upon juster Grounds, yet the less nicely the Reprov'd weighs the Qualifications of the Reprover, the more wise and virtuous will he be made by ev'ry Reproof. Wherefore you see that the foremention'd laudable Uneasiness will not evaporate into stubborn Defiance of Brotherly Discipline: No, it will rather encline you to comply with the Request I am just now going to make.

When your Friend justly reproves you, look on him at that instant as the peculiar Messenger of God, and under God the Tutor of your dear Soul. Open your Ears, humble your Heart, and bow your Neck to his Reproof. Freely acknowledge your Fault, and your Obligation to him for forwarding your Repentance, by minding you of it, and beg of him meekly to pray for your Improvement of so great a Mercy. Note it in your Diary, and thank God for the Warning, beseeching him to reward your Friend for his Charity.

This is the way to be truly grateful to God and your Friend, to have a Soul always thriving in Virtue, and making every Day nearer and nearer Advances to Perfection, to have a faithful Friend constantly by your Side, and a gracious God always at Hand to bless and succour you. This is the way to obtain

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true Peace, and to instill a Reverence of your own Reproofs into others; which Honour can never be their Lot who entertain and requite their Friend's Reproofs with nothing but gloomy Looks and snappish Replies.

Indeed Meekness, under truly Christian Reproof, is so seasonable and lovely a Virtue, that I cannot but advise every Christian, as I have briefly already, tho' he be reprov'd unseasonably and indecently, not to give way to Fury and Indignation. Patiently bearing with the Infirmities and Indiscretion of the Reprover, is a lively Draught of the Christian Spirit, and will make every one admire that beholds. Nevertheless, when you thank such a Reprover for his good-will, you would do well to advise him at the same Time to observe Season and Moderation in applying his Reproof for the time to come, lest his Indecencies scandalize weak People, to deter them from this excellent Duty. To be brief, Meekness, under the slanderous Tongue is the noblest Triumph and most creditable Vindication of our Innocence, and therefore it can't but besit a Christian when he is reprov'd by his Friend.

One more *Memento* may be of great Use. Be sure to take heed of quenching the Spirit. Don't struggle with, don't go to foil the Reproofs of Conscience, which convin-

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vinces of Sin, and accuses us impartially of all Faults. This tremendous Friend is about our Beds, and spies out all our Ways. Our Thoughts can find no Shelter from its Eye. Learn to tremble at God's Word, and those Threats which he pronounces by his Ministers against all Sin. Honour his Ministers for the sake of their Work and Message. Don't despise God in them, for he that despises the Reproof of God can't be fruitful under the Reproof of Men. 'Tis our Respect to those inward Convictions which God forms in our Minds, when we read his Law, and hear the Ministers of Jesus Christ, which makes our Souls truly hospitable to the loving Accusations of our Brethren. Be sure to search your Heart and humble your self in the Day of Affliction, for Afflictions are the Reproofs of God, who charges even his Angels themselves with Folly, and therefore, without Doubt, there's no Man that is afflicted but has some Sin which God designs to cure in afflicting him. This, my Friends, is a great Truth, for *how*, as *Job* speaks, c. 9. v. 2. *should man be just with God?* If he contends with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand: He is wise in Heart and mighty in Strength. Who has hardned himself against him and has prosper'd? Who removes Mountains and they know not, who overturns them in his Anger, who shakes the Earth
out

out of her Place, and the Pillars thereof tremble, who commands the Sun and it riseth not, and sealeth up the Stars. Dwell upon this Majestick Description of God to us, but a very imperfect one, if consider'd with relation to his incomprehensible Excellencies and Perfections, that you may revere and make the best Advantage of his kind and paternal Reproofs. And then read on again, v. 8. *Who alone spreads out the heavens, and treads upon the waves of the sea; who makes Arcturus, Orion and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south; who does great things past finding out, and wonders without number. Lo! he goes by us, and we see him not: He passes on also and we perceive him not: He takes away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What dost thou? If God will not withdraw his anger, even the proud helpers must stoop under him: How much less shall the humble Christian, who owns God just in all his ways, and that Pride was not made for Man; who was at first a Clod of Earth, and came a Mass of Corruption into the World, answer God and study a Controversie with him, whom, tho' we were declar'd Righteous by our own Hearts, and in the Judgment of our Neighbours, yet we should not contradict? For God is greater than our Hearts. Supplication better becomes us before our Judge, our All-seeing Judge: For he is not a Man, that we should*
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set a Time to plead with him. 'Tis vain and impious to justify our selves before God. Humble your selves therefore all ye that are afflicted, that he may lift up your Souls in due time. I shall conclude this Chapter with some excellent Passages out of the Son of Sirach. *There is a Reproof that is not comely. Again, Some man holds his tongue, and he is wise. 'Tis much better to Reprove than to be angry secretly; and he that confesseth his fault shall be preserv'd from hurt. How good is it when thou art reprov'd, to shew repentance? He that hates to be reprov'd is in the way of sinners, but he that fears the Lord will repent from his heart. A stubborn heart shall fare evil at the last, and he that loves danger shall perish therein. An obstinate heart shall be laden with sorrows, and the wicked man shall heap sin upon sin. In the punishment of the proud there is no remedy, for the plant of wickedness has taken root in him. The Advice is very plain, and need not be enlarg'd on, since I hope you will be so wise as to enlarge on them in your own Hearts.*

CHAP. VIII.

Containing some practical Inferences drawn from the preceeding Chapters.

Enough, I hope, has been said concerning the Usefulness of giving and receiving Reproof meekly: But since it is so useful we may learn,

1. First, That Fraternal, Private and Particular Confession of Sins is very beneficial; for since Reproving for visible Sins is of such great Use to the Soul, and we are conscious of many Sins which are invisible to our Friend, and for which, upon that account, he cannot reprove us; the obliging our selves to a Custom of mutually confessing all our known Faults will give Friends an Opportunity of Reproving and being Reprov'd for them too; whereby among other ordinary or extraordinary Helps, we have this Amulet of Reproof against all our Sins that are either discoverable by our private Reflection or our Friend's Inspection. But this is not

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a Place to insist at large upon this excellent Duty.

2. Secondly, We hence learn that we ought to repent of our past Neglectfulness of those with whom we professed Friendship, I mean our not reproving 'em in due Season, as also of that peevishness under Rebuke, by which we have frequently discourag'd our Friends from reproving us ; for since the said Neglect of Reproving, and the said peevishness when we are Reprov'd, have been demonstrated to be of a malignant Nature, they ought to be repented of, since 'tis our Duty to repent of all our known Sins.

3. Thirdly, We hence learn to abhor all Flattery, that great Enemy and Opposite of Friendly Reproof, which, like the Musick of the Syrens, forebodes Shipwrack to all their Souls who listen to it, and are intoxicated with it from others, or deceive and injure others with it themselves. We hence learn not to trust the gawdy Promises of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, and to love and prize our Friend's Favour no farther than he acts as is consistent with the Favour of God, who is every Man's chief and best Friend, for he is the Friend of the whole Universe. The Earth is the Lord's and all that therein is. The Earth is full of the Goodness of the Lord.

4. Fourthly,

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4. Fourthly, We hence learn the dreadful Danger of irreligious Sociableness; for since not reproving a Friend for a Fault, if it be habitual and unrepented of, is such a great Sin, then certainly to be Confederate with Sinners, to partake directly of other Men's Sins, by tempting them to commit 'em, patronizing them, or the Committers of them, or any other Methods of the like nature, must be very dreadful indeed, and ought always to be avoided by you, as you tremble at the Apprehensions of being thrown into the hottest Regions of Hell.

5. We hence learn, Fifthly, To compute our Friends, to know who are our true and who are our false Friends. 'Tis but asking one Question; *Do they use to reprove me, or do they not? Do they cocker me in my Sins, or do they strive by Reprehension to deliver me from the Dominion of Sin?*

6. Sixthly, We hence learn, that 'tis our Prudence to strike Friendship with those who sincerely, as far as we are able to judge, endeavour to lead a virtuous Life, and to keep a Conscience void of Offence, both towards God and towards Man, and to walk in all the Ordinances of Christ blameless; those, in short, who will consent that it shall be one Article in the Contract, constantly and mutually to reprove one another for the Faults which either in the other may discern,
and

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and that this Article may be the better kept, 'twill be prudence to chuse one who lives near you, and can have a frequent Eye on your Behaviour. Moreover,

7. Seventhly, because ill Inclinations and Habits are quite opposite to one another (for Vice is a medly of Contradiſtion, whereas all Graces compoſe one beautiful Harmony in the Soul) 'tis adviſeable to chuse one for your Friend, whose darling Corruption is opposite to your own, because he has not any Fondness for the Sins which most easily beset you, which will make him reprove you the more constantly: And you too, for the same Reason, the faithfuller on your part. When two Extremes lovingly encounter, the two Minds, which are apt to sink into these Extremes, will by degrees be polish'd into that golden Mediocrity, which is the Centre of all Virtue. All Men are naturally prone to be carried away without the Grace of God and their own Endeavours, by some particular ill Inclination.

Thus some are apt to be too flexible, others of too stiff a Disposition; some are never angry and some are always so; some are aspiring, others dejected; some are too jealous, others are too careless. 'Twould be endless to instance in all. Now if we observe by the Tenor of a Man's Life, notwithstanding some of these particular ill Inclinations
that

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that he strives to live unblameably, we have no Reason to except any Man, when we would chuse a Friend for the sake of any such particular ill Inclination. 'Tis an habitual Indulgence of Sin, not an ill original Inclination, which makes any Person unfit for Friendship; for the having some ill original Inclination is inevitable, tho' the being domineer'd over by it is avoidable by the Grace of Jesus Christ. If we defer our Choice of a Friend till we find a perfectly good Friend, we must stay till we are launch'd into the Ocean of Purity, the Kingdom of Heaven; and 'twill be too bold to promise our selves, that we should get thither, if we don't accept of the Advantage of but the imperfect Friendship of good Men in this State to advance us there, where we shall be above the need of particular Friendship. The best Rule that we can observe is, to chuse those for our Friends, whom we observe to be the most industrious in their Preparations for Heaven, tho' we cannot any more than charitably hope that they are in a way to be prepar'd for Heaven. 'Tis a great Mistake to think that similitude of natural Temper is a Foundation of Christian Friendship. Such Men's Complaisance and Complacency in one another's Tempers, I question not, will make their Friendship, such as it is, last long; but the Question is whether or no, since these Tempers
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are natural, and traduc'd from corrupt Parents, if we thoroughly enquire into 'em, they will betray us (if indulg'd too much) into Sin. If so, they must be rooted up, if we'll be true Christians, and consequently that durable Friendship rooted up with 'em too, which the Similitude of the Saints natural Tempers pitch'd in our Minds. Chuse the good natur'd for your Friend, and avoid the Angry, is a common Maxim. And who are the good natur'd? Why, in proper Speech, those that are good by Nature, of which sort, since the Fall of *Adam*, it may be safely said, There was never yet one to be found. But good-natur'd, in the Lexicon of the Vulgar, denotes those that are easie and compliant, so immoderately compliant that rather than they will displease their Companions, tho' it is very agreeable to the Dictates both of Reason and Religion, for us to displease and contradict one another, Truth shall be betray'd and exploded, Black shall be voted White, and their Friends, tho' they sin never so heinously, shall always pass unprov'd, Religion shall be ridicul'd Scot-free, and what not? These good-natur'd People, with the Religious are Religious, and with the Irreligious can be as contentedly Irreligious. Now whether or no this sort of good nature (if I may be allow'd to shew my self an Example of it, by

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complying with the Erroneous Multitude in calling it so) be not a predominant Passion, which must be corrected, cultivated and moderated by our Endeavours, concurrent with the Spirit of God, who alone can make us Peaceable without being sinful, and which otherwise will be a very serviceable Tool in carrying on the Devil's Trade of Undoing Human Souls, let the unprejudic'd judge. *Solomon* indeed says, *Make not Friendship with an angry Man*, but he do's not advise us in those Words to contract Intimacy only with Men of a peculiar, branchy and compliant Nature; for he does not mean by *angry* there, one who is naturally inclin'd to be angry, but one who does not curb, withstand and regulate a peculiarly vigorous Inclination to Anger; for if we should suppose the first, we must suppose a great part of Mankind excluded from all possibility of Friendship, since a great many are inclin'd to be immoderately, and too soon angry, which nevertheless may be good Christians, and therefore good Friends: For why may not the Grace of God cure that as well as other Inclinations? Nay, indeed, I need not have said a great Part of Mankind, for according to that Interpretation of the Word *Angry*, in *Solomon*, no Man is fit to be a Friend, since ev'ry Man is visibly inclin'd very strongly to some particular Extreme,

tho'

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tho' not to the Extreme of *Anger* ; and thus we must exclude our good-natur'd People too: For never to resent, be the Occasion never so just, or the Consequences never so momentous, is as bad as to be continually resenting without Cause, out of Place, too long or too soon. Is there an Anger which tends to no good? Why, so there is a Bashfulness (if we may believe a very wise Man) a Silence, a sluggish, immoderate, irrational Compliance, that has trundled many Souls to Hell, and therefore tends to no good.

To draw near to a Conclusion: 'Tis impossible to have Friends here, that are good by Nature or perfect by Grace; the best do but follow after Perfection here. Your best way then will be to deny your self, by chusing one for your Friend whose Capital ill Inclination (be it that of Anger or Compliance, or any other) is contrary to yours, that is to say, provided, besides the Oppositeness of his original, involuntary Inclination, he has made a steddy Resolution (which is but the adopted Inclination of the Religious) with your self to strive against it, and to assist you to subdue your strongest ill Inclination: For this will shew that you are ready to deny Self for the sake of Virtue, and that you are willing to cut off the excessive Inclination; which is the most deform'd Protuberance of your Soul. Your Endeavour should

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should be the same with your Friend's, to conquer all immoderate Inclinations to Extremes in one another; but it is most eligible that the peculiar and strongest Inclinations of both of you to some certain Extremes should not be the same, because your Danger will in all likelihood by this means be strengthn'd instead of being lessen'd. If the flexible associate mostly with the flexible, they will but make one another more credulous and apt to be deluded: If the Cholerick are frequently with the Cholerick, they will in all probability inflame one another's Passionateness: Melancholy People are not fit Company for the Melancholy, because they are not fit to carry on the general good Inclination of vanquishing all Extremes in one another. The Observation holds good in other Cases. Many Men had never been so sottish and knavish, so morose or circumducible, if they had had the Prudence not to have accompanied with those mostly whom they found strongly inclin'd by Nature to the same Extremes. But I shall have occasion to speak more largely of this in another *Essay*. *Eadem velle & nolle firma amicitia est*, as a certain *Historian* speaks: And *Amantium ira amoris redintegratio est*, to speak with the *Comedian*, are very excellent Sentences, and very reconcilable with one another: For 'tis true, that to have the same virtuous Resolutions

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tions which cannot contradict one another, is the Foundation of a firm and sound Friendship; and 'tis as true, that to let our Vices, which are opposite to one another, draw Blood from one another, is the way to dispatch the Traytors, and to bring you to that Place where your Friendship will be no longer athletick, but like the Union of the glorious Angels, will suffer no Interruption, and be too strong to be broken by the conjoynt Forces of Hell.

C H A P. IX.

The CONCLUSION.

Exhorting Christians to a Conscientious Use of the whole Book.

MY Discourse is now almost expir'd, all that is yet remaining is the Exhortatory Part: And since I have done my poor Endeavour, I hope, Christian Reader, I may without Offence humbly mind thee of thy Part. To read Books like Cormorants of Novelty, only out of Curiosity, and an Insatiable Thirst after New Notions, is rather
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to strive to be singular, than to be good. When the Mind is made Tied by a multiplicity of Books, and our Life, instead of being improv'd and form'd more regularly, becomes superciliously more and more neglected; Reading is so far from Benefitting, that it does great Mischief to the Perusers, for to him that knows God's Will and do's it not, to him it's Sin. I do therefore earnestly exhort thee, Not to suffer these Leaves to increase thy Condemnation, by a cursory and fruitless reading of them. Think and consider seriously of what has been writ, that thou may'st not repent in the End that thou hast bestow'd so much Time, Candor and Patience on this rough Work. Consider, I beseech thee, that Opportunity and Condescension are too valuable to be flung away: They are rare and of great Price in ev'ry wise Man's Eye, and therefore 'tis Unpardonable Folly to be prodigal of them. And, if after due Consideration, thou art convinc'd of the Reasonableness of the Counsels herein given, joyn with thy sincere Well-wisher and say: *The Lord prospers the Devices of the Simple, and breaks in Pieces the Devices of Mighty Spirits; blessed be the Name of the Lord. How great are the contemptible, when they are Instruments in the Hand of so good, so great a Lord? O who is like unto the Lord our God, who hath his Dwelling so high, and yet*

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humbleth himself thus to behold the weak Contrivances of his vile Creatures on Earth.

And I am inclin'd to believe, That if the Drift of this mean Performance be answer'd by but a very few Christians, God may thereby be mov'd to enable thy sincere Friend to write with that Clearness and Vivacity hereafter, which I ingenuously own are very much wanting in the present Work: Nay, perhaps, if the Reader, tho' not out of Kindness to me, yet for the Sake of the Subject, and the Publick, will be so wise as to connive at the Deformity of it, some great Master of this Faculty may at length be prevail'd on to take the other Acts of Spiritual Beneficence into their own Hands: For they know the Worth of their own Time and Labour too well to run that Hazard which the mean do. But indeed I have found so much Repulse in this Affair, that I have almost condemn'd all such Hopes for Dreams and deceitful Expectations. We do not see the Nakedness, Poverty, Filth and Dangers of our Souls, as we do those of our Bodies: Were the Informations of patient Thoughts as obvious and as easie to be got as those of Sense, 'twould be otherwise; but since 'tis not so, I don't wonder that so many Persons, whom God has blest with excellent Parts, when they have no set Seasons of serious Meditation, should slight those Subjects which immediately relate to

to the Improvement of the Soul, whilst to pleasure some corrupt Patrons and lewd Opinions of this Age, for the sake of a little vain Applause and less Profit, they have dress'd up Vice and Debauchery in all the Gallantry of Wit and Expression, to the great Disadvantage of Religion, and the Dishonour of a Christian Kingdom: But not to distract the Good, or enrage the Bad with any more Reflections of this Nature; *Let, I earnestly intreat thee, Love be without Dissimulation: Speak the Truth from the Heart one with another, for we are Members one of another. Abhor that which is Evil, and cleave to that which is Good: Follow after Charity, for this is the way to possess your Souls in Peace. Do good and reprove according to your several Opportunities: Walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith you are call'd, with all Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-Suffering, forbearing and curing one another's Disorders. Walk in Love, as Christ, who gave himself for us, that ye may be angry and yet not sin: That ye may reprove, and yet put away from you all Bitterness, Wrath and Clamour, with all Malice; being kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven you: Learn to be impartial, and to converse with all Godly Simplicity in the World: Walk as Children of Light: The Fruit of the Spirit is Righteousness, Goodness and Truth: Wherefore prove what*

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is acceptable unto the Lord. Let no corrupt Communication proceed from you, but that which is good and edifies, and will minister Grace to those that hear. And that you may, when your Friend strikes you on the one Cheek [any tender part] turn the other also [be ready still to be disciplin'd for some other Sin which does most easily beset you] submitting to him in the Fear of the Lord. Be sure never to grieve the Spirit of God. Christians, Be not wise in your own Conceits: Be not lofty in your own Eyes. We stand here in the midst of Snares and Enemies, whether we be in Honour or Dishonour, whether we abound or are in Want: We wrestle not only with Flesh and Blood, but with Principalities and Powers, with Spiritual Wickedness in High Places, and therefore had need stand in a watchful Posture: The Devil accuses us before our God Day and Night: Is it not therefore prudent to link together, to sympathize with one another's Infirmities? To be weak with our Friends when they are weak, to burn when they offend, after the Example of S. Paul? Sin is the Adversity of the Soul, and therefore the forest Adversity of all: The Spirit of a Man may sustain his Infirmities, the Soul may be above all External Calamities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear? Nothing can give the Soul any lasting Support, under Guilt. Misery will cling for

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for ever about the Spirit, unless that be remov'd: Now it cannot be remov'd any where but here: So that 'tis in vain to think of Relieving a Friend under this Adversity in the other World, as the Devil, who makes it his Business to throw us into it, very well knows, when he suggests Delays to us, if he finds us inclin'd to help one another out of it: Let us therefore speedily unite our Endeavours, and not be so base as to disown our Friends in the dark Season of Adversity: To day it is not too late: To Morrow it may be so. Let us countermine him in his own Way, by accusing our selves and one another, that by our Humiliations we may deliver our selves from the Power of Sin here, and the dreadful ways of it, even Eternal Torments in the other World. When we use our best Counsels and Endeavours both by our selves and with one another, we may reasonably trust in God, and in a pious succumbency on his powerful Grace and Spirit, promise our selves a Victory, if we continue unto the End. But proudly contemning such a mighty Enemy, and a lazy Relyance on God, who has made us Creatures capable of Vigilance, Activity, Counsel, and assisting one another's Souls, will not avail us now, nor answer for us before the Final Tribunal.

This is not a Place of Ease and Rest: We have many Corruptions to subdue: There is

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no Possibility of living without some Interruptions of our Peace, some Thwarts and Rebukes, till we are arriv'd thither, where there will be no such thing as Improvement; but we shall always enjoy that degree of Glory, with which we are invested at our first Entrance. But here the best Man may excel himself and daily find some Occasions of Alteration in his Life. The Sensual only seek Rest in this World, and therefore think much to be in the least disturb'd in the Enjoyment of their Lusts. They are impatient of any Lett in the Career of Concupiscence: The Reason of this is because they have shook off the Reins of Reason; but a wise Man has regard to the End. And for that Reason, how irksom soever the Method of Friendship, which has been now propos'd; may be to the Flesh, he will readily imbrace it, since 'twill prove, after considerable continuance in it, Sanatory of the Spirit, and Perfective of the Man. Religion at first walks with its Subjects by crooked Ways, brings Fear and Dread upon them, and torments and searches them with her Discipline 'till they see the Beauty of her Laws, and she can trust their Souls, refin'd as Gold in the Furnace, without Curb and Restraint: Then she ravishes them with ineffable Comforts, and that Peace which is the Secret of the Saints: Before the last solemn Tribunal, the Tribunal of an honest Friend will

be

Applicatory Collects of Devotion

I. *For Purity.*

DEAR Jesu! who wast the great Exemplar of Holiness, when thou didst condescend to wear Human Nature, and who didst dye for laps'd Man, that they might be capable of Pardon for their Fall in *Adam*, and of Regeneration and Purity, by the Assistance of the Holy Spirit: Deign, I beseech thee, to send that Spirit to breath upon me, that I may be Holy and Pure in all my Conversation, as thou wast, and may utterly detest Familiarity with any kind of Wickedness whatever. Give me a clear Sight of the Deformity of all Sin, and of the unvaluable Worth of a Soul, that I may purifie my self from all filtinefs both of Flesh and Spirit.

II. *For Catholick Benevolence.*

GRANT, Heavenly Father, I beseech thee, that by the Residence of thy Holy Spirit in my Heart, all the Christian Graces may flourish there, and adorn my Life more and more ev'ry Day, till my Love of God be fixt and immutable, and I can truly say, I have an universal and entire Love for all Mankind.

III. *For*

III. *For Prudence in the Choice of a Friend.*

TEach me, good God, to know the Weakness of my Frame, and the Treachery and Uncertainty of this State and all that therein is; and since I can be useful but to a few, point out and procure to me the fittest Objects of my Love, and Receptacles of my Secrets; that my Choice being approv'd of by thee, I may never have Cause to repent of my Contracts, but may daily find fresh Occasions of lauding thee on their behalf, who honour or benefit me by their Intimacy.

IV. *For Fidelity and Gratitude to a Friend.*

INstruct, Incite and Enable me, O Lord, I beseech thee, frequently to manifest the Sincerity and Briskness of my Love to all those who have been Ministers of Good to me under thy gracious and wakeful Providence. O never suffer me to provoke my Conscience to upbraid me of Unkindness, Ingratitude and Treachery to any, to whom I have betroth'd my Soul, and from whom I have receiv'd many Pledges of Love. Treasure up their Kindnesses securely in their Memory, and give me Power to make suitable Returns to them: And because all other Usefulness will not suffice to make them Happy unless they be Virtuous, and use their Opportunities and Prosperities to thy Glory; make me abhor all Flattery, Dissimulation, and hypocritical Love or Complacency which may entitle me to connive at any sinful Action in my Friend. Give me Courage to frown in due Season; and when my Contract can't but be violated unless my Affection for him, in Subordination to the Love of thee, Great God, feel a
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Medicinal Interruption; suffer me not, O Lord, to turn my other Kindnesses into Curses, by withholding Seasonable Reproofs, lest we prove eternal-Enemies to one another in an eternal Banishment from the Light of thy Countenance: From which good Lord deliver us.

V. *For Peace.*

THAT my Reproofs may work benignly and fruitfully in his Soul, I do with the lowest Prostration of Soul and Body implore the Pardon of all my past and notorious Offences, and the Auxiliaries of thy Grace and divine Spirit in the Hour of Temptation, against all presumptuous Wickedness, that it may never domineer over me, and hinder me by a Load of intolerable Guilt, from being able cheerfully to attempt to rescue my Brother out of the Talons of Sin. Give me that peaceable and quiet Spirit, which is not only a Recommendation of Reproof, but an universal Ornament of ev'ry Christian.

VI. *For Spiritual Love and Spiritual Joy.*

BEautiful Creator of Spirits! inflame me with an unextinguishable Love of thee, that I may obey all thy Commandments; and when I reprove or do any thing else in compliance to thy known Will, I may have an Eye to thy Glory, and the Pleasure of my Friend, as far as it consists with thy Favour, and not idolatrously pay Homage to a private carnal Humor. O may it not be thy Servant's Lot ever to cringe at the Beck of Malice, restless Envy, or an unreasonable Jealousie, or to have Ears greedy to suck in Complaints against him. But grant that all the Offences of
my

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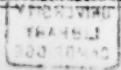
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before thee, my God, in my Intercessions for him.

IX. *For Faith.*

HONOUR me with that Faith with which thou rewardest a sacred Intention, and which will free me from Pride and Self-Confidence on the one Hand, and a servile Distrust and Despondency on the other Hand, that I may enjoy that equanimity which he that is unfetter'd from all immoderate Passions, and adheres only to thee by an humble Application of Christ's Merits, and an universal Conformity to his excellent Laws, only can enjoy.

X. *For Meekness.*

BESTOW on me, finally, my Long-Suffering, tho' offended God, Meekness to Reprove with Humility, a Sense of my own Weakness and Lability, which will direct me to reprove with that Tenderness which the Frowardness and Infirmities of a Patient require, that I may constantly remember how ill Majesty comports with a Sinner, a Friend, and a Brother, and may not provoke him to be inconsiderate and to trample on my Reproof. And that I may be always ready to receive his Seasonable Reproofs with a graceful Mind, that our Defects may be every Day both less in Number and less in Appearance, and our Excellencies and Virtues may be still more and more illustrious and Exemplary, till we shall be both translated into that State where Virtue will cease to be gradual, and receive an unchangeable Perfection. Which Favours I beg in the Name and Words of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, not only in our own, but in the behalf of all Mankind, saying,

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

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